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BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c.

THE FIRST SCENE.

COMBE-RAVEN, SOMERSETSHIRE.

CHAPTER I.

THE hands on the hall-clock pointed to half-past six in the morning. The house was a country residence in West Somersetshire, called Combe-Raven. The day was the fourth of March; and the year was eighteen hundred and forty-six.

No sounds but the steady ticking of the clock, and the lumpish snoring of a large dog stretched on a mat outside the dining-room door, disturbed the mysterious morning stillness of hall and staircase. Who were the sleepers hidden in the upper regions? Let the house reveal its own secrets; and, one by one, as they descend the stairs from their beds, let the sleepers disclose themselves.

As the clock pointed to a quarter to seven, the dog woke and shook himself. After waiting in vain for the footman, who was accustomed to let him out, the animal wandered restlessly from one closed door to another on the ground floor; and, returning to his mat in great perplexity, appealed to the sleeping family, with a long and melancholy howl.

Before the last notes of the dog's remonstrance had died away, the oaken stairs in the higher regions of the house creaked under slowly-descending footsteps. In a minute more, the first of the female servants made her appearance, with a dingy woollen shawl over her shoulders—for the March morning was bleak; and rheumatism and the cook were old acquaintances.

Receiving the dog's first cordial advances with the worst possible grace, the cook slowly opened the hall door, and let the animal out. It was a wild morning. Over a spacious lawn, and behind a black plantation of firs, the rising sun rent its way upward through piles of ragged grey cloud; heavy drops of rain fell few and far between; the March wind shuddered round the corners of the house, and the wet trees swayed wearily.

Seven o'clock struck; and the signs of domestic life began to show themselves in more rapid succession.

The housemaid came down—tall and slim, with

the state of the spring temperature written redly on her nose. The lady's-maid followed—young, smart, plump, and sleepy. The kitchen-maid came next—afflicted with the face-ache, and making no secret of her sufferings. Last of all, the footman appeared, yawning disconsolately; the living picture of a man who felt that he had been defrauded of his fair night's rest.

The conversation of the servants, when they assembled before the slowly-lighting kitchen fire, referred to a recent family event, and turned at starting on this question: Had Thomas, the footman, seen anything of the concert at Clifton at which his master and the two young ladies had been present on the previous night? Yes; Thomas had heard the concert; he had been paid for to go in at the back; it was a loud concert; it was a hot concert; it was described at the top of the bills as Grand; whether it was worth travelling sixteen miles to hear by railway, with the additional hardship of going back nineteen miles by road, at half-past one in the morning—was a question which he would leave his master and the young ladies to decide; his own opinion, in the mean time, being unhesitatingly, No. Further inquiries, on the part of all the female servants in succession, elicited no additional information of any sort. Thomas could hum none of the songs, and could describe none of the ladies' dresses. His audience accordingly gave him up in despair; and the kitchen small-talk flowed back into its ordinary channels, until the clock struck eight, and startled the assembled servants into separating for their morning's work.

A quarter-past eight, and nothing happened. Half-past—and more signs of life appeared from the bedroom regions. The next member of the family who came down stairs was Mr. Andrew Vanstone, the master of the house.

Tall, stout, and upright—with bright blue eyes, and healthy florid complexion—his brown plush shooting-jacket carelessly buttoned awry; his vixenish little Scotch terrier barking unbuked at his heels; one hand thrust into his waistcoat pocket, and the other smacking the banisters cheerfully as he came down stairs humming a tune—Mr. Vanstone showed his character on the surface of him freely to all men. An easy, hearty, handsome, good-humoured gentleman, who walked on the sunny side of the way

of life, and who asked nothing better than to meet all his fellow-passengers in this world on the sunny side, too. Estimating him by years, he had turned fifty. Judging him by lightness of heart, strength of constitution, and capacity for enjoyment, he was no older than most men who have only turned thirty.

"Thomas!" cried Mr. Vanstone, taking up his old felt hat and his thick walking-stick from the hall table. "Breakfast, this morning, at ten. The young ladies are not likely to be down earlier after the concert last night.—By-the-by, how did you like the concert, yourself, eh? You thought it was Grand? Quite right; so it was. Nothing but Crash-Bang, varied now and then by Bang-Crash; all the women dressed within an inch of their lives; smothering heat, blazing gas, and no room for anybody—yes, yes, Thomas: Grand's the word for it, and Comfortable isn't." With that expression of opinion, Mr. Vanstone whistled to his vixenish terrier; flourished his stick at the hall-door in cheerful defiance of the rain; and set off through wind and weather for his morning walk.

The hands, stealing their steady way round the dial of the clock, pointed to ten minutes to nine. Another member of the family appeared on the stairs—Miss Garth, the governess.

No observant eyes could have surveyed Miss Garth without seeing at once that she was a north-countrywoman. Her hard-featured face; her masculine readiness and decision of movement; her obstinate honesty of look and manner, all proclaimed her border birth and border training. Though little more than forty years of age, her hair was quite grey; and she wore over it the plain cap of an old woman. Neither hair nor head-dress was out of harmony with her face—it looked older than her years: the hard handwriting of trouble had scored it heavily at some past time. The self-possession of her progress down the stairs, and the air of habitual authority with which she looked about her, spoke well for her position in Mr. Vanstone's family. This was evidently not one of the forlorn, persecuted, pitifully dependent order of governesses. Here was a woman who lived on ascertained and honourable terms with her employers—a woman who looked capable of sending any parents in England to the right-about, if they failed to rate her at her proper value.

"Breakfast at ten?" repeated Miss Garth, when the footman had answered the bell, and had mentioned his master's orders. "Ha! I thought what would come of that concert last night. When people who live in the country patronise public amusements, public amusements return the compliment by upsetting the family afterwards for days together. *You're* upset, Thomas, I can see—your eyes are as red as a ferret's, and your cravat looks as if you had slept in it. Bring the kettle at a quarter to ten—and if you don't get better in the course of the day, come to me, and I'll give you a dose of physic. That's a well-meaning lad, if you only let him

alone," continued Miss Garth, in soliloquy, when Thomas had retired; "but he's not strong enough for concerts twenty miles off. They wanted *me* to go with them, last night. Yes: catch me!"

Nine o'clock struck; and the minute hand stole on to twenty minutes past the hour, before any more footsteps were heard on the stairs. At the end of that time, two ladies appeared, descending to the breakfast-room together—Mrs. Vanstone and her eldest daughter.

If the personal attractions of Mrs. Vanstone, at an earlier period of life, had depended solely on her native English charms of complexion and freshness, she must have long since lost the last relics of her fairer self. But her beauty, as a young woman, had passed beyond the average national limits; and she still preserved the advantage of her more exceptional personal gifts. Although she was now in her forty-fourth year; although she had been tried, in bygone times, by the premature loss of more than one of her children, and by long attacks of illness which had followed those bereavements of former years—she still preserved the fair proportion and subtle delicacy of feature, once associated with the all-adorned brightness and freshness of beauty, which had left her never to return. Her eldest child, now descending the stairs by her side, was the mirror in which she could look back, and see again the reflexion of her own youth. There, folded thick on the daughter's head, lay the massive dark hair, which, on the mother's, was fast turning grey. There, in the daughter's cheek, glowed the lovely dusky red which had faded from the mother's, to bloom again no more. Miss Vanstone had already reached the first maturity of womanhood: she had completed her six-and-twentieth year. Inheriting the dark majestic character of her mother's beauty, she had yet hardly inherited all its charms. Though the shape of her face was the same, the features were scarcely so delicate, their proportion was scarcely so true. She was not so tall. She had the dark brown eyes of her mother—full and soft, with the steady lustre in them which Mrs. Vanstone's eyes had lost—and yet there was less interest, less refinement and depth of feeling in her expression: it was gentle and feminine, but clouded by a certain quiet reserve, from which her mother's face was free. If we dare to look closely enough, may we not observe, that the moral force of character and the higher intellectual capacities in parents, seem often to wear out mysteriously in the course of transmission to children? In these days of insidious nervous exhaustion and subtly-spreading nervous malady, is it not possible that the same rule may apply, less rarely than we are willing to admit, to the bodily gifts as well?

The mother and daughter slowly descended the stairs together—the first dressed in dark brow, with an Indian shawl thrown over her shoulders; the second more simply attired in black, with

a plain collar and cuffs, and a dark orange coloured ribbon over the bosom of her dress. As they crossed the hall, and entered the breakfast-room, Miss Vanstone was full of the all-absorbing subject of the last night's concert.

"I am so sorry, mamma, you were not with us," she said. "You have been so strong and so well ever since last summer—you have felt so many years younger, as you said yourself—that I am sure the exertion would not have been too much for you."

"Perhaps not, my love—but it was as well to keep on the safe side."

"Quite as well," remarked Miss Garth, appearing at the breakfast-room door. "Look at Norah (good morning, my dear)—look, I say, at Norah. A perfect wreck; a living proof of your wisdom and mine in staying at home. The vile gas, the foul air, the late hours—what can you expect? She's not made of iron, and she suffers accordingly. No, my dear, you needn't deny it. I see you've got a headache."

Norah's dark, handsome face brightened into a smile—then lightly clouded again with its accustomed quiet reserve.

"A very little headache; not half enough to make me regret the concert," she said, and walked away by herself to the window.

On the far side of a garden and paddock, the view overlooked a stream, some farm-buildings which lay beyond, and the opening of a wooded rocky pass (called, in Somersetshire, a Combe), which here cleft its way through the hills that closed the prospect. A winding strip of road was visible, at no great distance, amid the undulations of the open ground; and along this strip the stalwart figure of Mr. Vanstone was now easily recognisable, returning to the house from his morning walk. He flourished his stick gaily, as he observed his eldest daughter at the window. She nodded and waved her hand in return, very gracefully and prettily—but with something of old-fashioned formality in her manner, which looked strangely in so young a woman, and which seemed out of harmony with a salutation addressed to her father.

The hall-clock struck the adjourned breakfast hour. When the minute-hand had recorded the lapse of five minutes more, a door banged in the bedroom regions—a clear young voice was heard singing blithely—light rapid footsteps pattered on the upper stairs, descended with a jump to the landing, and pattered again, faster than ever, down the lower flight. In another moment, the youngest of Mr. Vanstone's two daughters (and two only surviving children) dashed into view on the dingy old oaken stairs, with the suddenness of a flash of light; and clearing the last three steps into the hall at a jump, presented herself breathless in the breakfast-room, to make the family circle complete.

By one of those strange caprices of Nature, which science leaves still unexplained, the youngest of Mr. Vanstone's children presented

no recognisable resemblance to either of her parents. How had she come by her hair? how had she come by her eyes? Even her father and mother had asked themselves those questions, as she grew up to girlhood, and had been sorely perplexed to answer them. Her hair was of that purely light brown hue—unmixed with flaxen, or yellow, or red—which is oftener seen on the plumage of a bird than on the head of a human being. It was soft and plentiful, and waved downward from her low forehead in regular folds—but, to some tastes, it was dull and dead, in its absolute want of glossiness, in its monotonous purity of plain light colour. Her eyebrows and eyelashes were just a shade darker than her hair, and seemed made expressly for those violet blue eyes, which assert their most irresistible charm when associated with a fair complexion. But it was here exactly that the promise of her face failed of performance in the most startling manner. The eyes, which should have been dark, were incomprehensibly and discordantly light: they were of that nearly colourless grey, which, though little attractive in itself, possesses the rare compensating merit of interpreting the finest gradations of thought, the gentlest changes of feeling, the deepest trouble of passion, with a subtle transparency of expression which no darker eyes can rival. Thus quaintly self-contradictory in the upper part of her face, she was hardly less at variance with established ideas of harmony in the lower. Her lips had the true feminine delicacy of form, her cheeks the lovely roundness and smoothness of youth—but the mouth was too large and firm, the chin too square and massive for her sex and age. Her complexion partook of the pure monotony of tint which characterised her hair—it was of the same soft warm creamy fairness all over, without a tinge of colour in the cheeks, except on occasions of unusual bodily exertion, or sudden mental disturbance. The whole countenance—so remarkable in its strongly-opposed characteristics—was rendered additionally striking by its extraordinary mobility. The large, electric, light-grey eyes were hardly ever in repose; all varieties of expression followed each other over the plastic, ever-changing face, with a giddy rapidity which left sober analysis far behind in the race. The girl's exuberant vitality asserted itself all over her, from head to foot. Her figure—taller than her sister's, taller than the average of woman's height; instinct with such a seductive, serpentine suppleness, so lightly and playfully graceful that its movements suggested, not unnaturally, the movements of a young cat—her figure was so perfectly developed already that no one who saw her could have supposed that she was only eighteen. She bloomed in the full physical maturity of twenty years or more—bloomed naturally and irresistibly, in right of her matchless health and strength. Here, in truth, lay the mainspring of this strangely-constituted organisation. Her headlong course down the house-stairs; the brisk activity of all her movements; the incessant sparkle of expres-

sion in her face; the enticing gaiety which took the hearts of the quietest people by storm—even the reckless delight in bright colours, which showed itself in her brilliantly-striped morning dress, in her fluttering ribbons, in the large scarlet rosettes on her smart little shoes—all sprang alike from the same source; from the overflowing physical health which strengthened every muscle, braced every nerve, and set the warm young blood tingling through her veins, like the blood of a growing child.

On her entry into the breakfast-room, she was saluted with the customary remonstrance which her flighty disregard of all punctuality habitually provoked from the long-suffering household authorities. In Miss Garth's favourite phrase, "Magdalen was born with all the senses—except a sense of order."

Magdalen! It was a strange name to have given her? Strange, indeed; and yet, chosen under no extraordinary circumstances. The name had been borne by one of Mr. Vanstone's sisters, who had died in early youth; and, in affectionate remembrance of her, he had called his second daughter by it—just as he had called his eldest daughter Norah, for his wife's sake. Magdalen! Surely, the grand old Bible name—suggestive of a sad and sombre dignity; recalling, in its first association, mournful ideas of penitence and seclusion—had been here, as events had turned out, inappropriately bestowed? Surely, this self-contradictory girl had perversely accomplished one contradiction more, by developing into a character which was out of all harmony with her own christian name!

"Late again!" said Mrs. Vanstone, as Magdalen breathlessly kissed her.

"Late again!" chimed in Miss Garth, when Magdalen came her way next. "Well?" she went on, taking the girl's chin familiarly in her hand, with a half-satirical, half-fond attention which betrayed that the youngest daughter, with all her faults, was the governess's favourite—"Well? and what has the concert done for you? What form of suffering has dissipation inflicted on *your* system, this morning?"

"Suffering!" repeated Magdalen, recovering her breath, and the use of her tongue with it. "I don't know the meaning of the word: if there's anything the matter with me, I'm too well. Suffering! I'm ready for another concert to-night, and a ball to-morrow, and a play the day after. Oh," cried Magdalen, dropping into a chair and crossing her hands rapturously on the table, "how I do like pleasure!"

"Come! that's explicit, at any rate," said Miss Garth. "I think Pope must have had you in his mind, when he wrote his famous lines:

Men some to business, some to pleasure take,
But every woman is at heart a rake."

"The deuce she is!" cried Mr. Vanstone, entering the room while Miss Garth was making her quotation, with the dogs at his heels.

"Well; live and learn. If you're all rakes, Miss Garth, the sexes are turned topsy-turvy with a vengeance; and the men will have nothing left for it, but to stop at home and darn the stockings.—Let's have some breakfast."

"How-d'y-e-do, papa?" said Magdalen, taking Mr. Vanstone as boisterously round the neck, as if he belonged to some larger order of Newfoundland dog, and was made to be romped with at his daughter's convenience. "I'm the rake Miss Garth means; and I want to go to another concert—or a play, if you like—or a ball, if you prefer it—or, anything else in the way of amusement that puts me into a new dress, and plunges me into a crowd of people, and illuminates me with plenty of light, and sets me in a tingle of excitement all over, from head to foot. Anything will do, as long as it doesn't send us to bed at eleven o'clock."

Mr. Vanstone sat down composedly under his daughter's flow of language, like a man who was well used to verbal inundation from that quarter. "If I am to be allowed my choice of amusements next time," said the worthy gentleman, "I think a play will suit me better than a concert. The girls enjoyed themselves amazingly, my dear," he continued, addressing his wife. "More than I did, I must say. It was altogether above my mark. They played one piece of music which lasted forty minutes. It stopped three times by the way; and we all thought it was done each time, and clapped our hands, rejoiced to be rid of it. But on it went again, to our great surprise and mortification, till we gave it up in despair, and all wished ourselves at Jericho. Norah, my dear! when we had Crash-Bang for forty minutes, with three stoppages by the way, what did they call it?"

"A Symphony, papa," replied Norah.

"Yes, you darling old Goth, a Symphony by the great Beethoven!" added Magdalen. "How can you say you were not amused? Have you forgotten the yellow-looking foreign woman, with the unpronounceable name? Don't you remember the faces she made when she sang? and the way she curtsied and curtsied, till she cheated the foolish people into crying encore? Look here, mamma—look here, Miss Garth!"

She snatched up an empty plate from the table, to represent a sheet of music, held it before her in the established concert-room position, and produced an imitation of the unfortunate singer's grimaces and curtsies, so accurately and quaintly true to the original, that her father roared with laughter; and even the footman (who came in at that moment, with the post-bag) rushed out of the room again, and committed the indecorum of echoing his master audibly on the other side of the door.

"Letters, papa. I want the key," said Magdalen, passing from the imitation at the breakfast-table to the post-bag on the sideboard, with the easy abruptness which characterised all her actions.

Mr. Vanstone searched his pockets and shook

his head. Though his youngest daughter might resemble him in nothing else, it was easy to see where Magdalen's unmethodical habits came from.

"I dare say I have left it in the library, along with my other keys," said Mr. Vanstone. "Go and look for it, my dear."

"You really should check Magdalen," pleaded Mrs. Vanstone, addressing her husband, when her daughter had left the room. "Those habits of mimicry are growing on her; and she speaks to you with a levity which it is positively shocking to hear."

"Exactly what I have said myself, till I am tired of repeating it," remarked Miss Garth. "She treats Mr. Vanstone as if he was a kind of younger brother of hers."

"You are kind to us in everything else, papa; and you make kind allowance for Magdalen's high spirits—don't you?" said the quiet Norah, taking her father's part and her sister's, with so little show of resolution on the surface, that few observers would have been sharp enough to detect the genuine substance beneath it.

"Thank you, my dear," said good-natured Mr. Vanstone. "Thank you, for a very pretty speech. As for Magdalen," he continued, addressing his wife and Miss Garth, "she's an unbroken filly. Let her caper and kick in the paddock to her heart's content. Time enough to break her to harness, when she gets a little older."

The door opened, and Magdalen returned with the key. She unlocked the post-bag at the side-board and poured out the letters in a heap. Sorting them gaily in less than a minute, she approached the breakfast-table with both hands full; and delivered the letters all round with the business-like rapidity of a London postman.

"Two for Norah," she announced, beginning with her sister. "Three for Miss Garth. None for mamma. One for me. And the other six all for papa. You lazy old darling, you hate answering letters, don't you?" pursued Magdalen, dropping the postman's character and assuming the daughter's. "How you will grumble and fidget in the study! and how you will wish there were no such things as letters in the world! and how red your nice old bald head will get at the top with the worry of writing the answers! and how many of the answers you will leave until to-morrow, after all! *The Bristol Theatre's open, papa,*" she whispered, slyly and suddenly in her father's ear; "I saw it in the newspaper when I went to the library to get the key. Let's go to-morrow night!"

While his daughter was chattering, Mr. Vanstone was mechanically sorting his letters. He turned over the first four, in succession, and looked carelessly at the addresses. When he came to the fifth, his attention, which had hitherto wandered towards Magdalen, suddenly became fixed on the post-mark of the letter.

Stooping over him, with her head on his shoulder, Magdalen could see the post-mark as plainly as her father saw it:—NEW ORLEANS.

"An American letter, papa!" she said. "Who do you know at New Orleans?"

Mrs. Vanstone started, and looked eagerly at her husband, the moment Magdalen spoke those words.

Mr. Vanstone said nothing. He quietly removed his daughter's arm from his neck, as if he wished to be free from all interruption. She returned accordingly to her place at the breakfast-table. Her father, with the letter in his hand, waited a little before he opened it; her mother looking at him, the while, with an eager expectant attention, which attracted Miss Garth's notice and Norah's, as well as Magdalen's.

After a minute or more of hesitation, Mr. Vanstone opened the letter.

His face changed colour the instant he read the first lines; his cheeks fading to a dull, yellow-brown hue, which would have been ashy paleness in a less florid man; and his expression becoming saddened and overclouded in a moment. Norah and Magdalen, watching anxiously, saw nothing but the change that passed over their father. Miss Garth alone observed the effect which that change produced on the attentive mistress of the house.

It was not the effect which she, or any one, could have anticipated. Mrs. Vanstone looked excited rather than alarmed. A faint flush rose on her cheeks—her eyes brightened—she stirred the tea round and round in her cup in a restless impatient manner which was not natural to her.

Magdalen, in her capacity of spoilt child, was, as usual, the first to break the silence.

"What is the matter, papa?" she asked.

"Nothing," said Mr. Vanstone, sharply, without looking up at her.

"I'm sure there must be something," persisted Magdalen. "I'm sure there is bad news, papa, in that American letter."

"There is nothing in the letter that concerns you," said Mr. Vanstone.

It was the first direct rebuff that Magdalen had ever received from her father. She looked at him with an incredulous surprise, which would have been irresistibly absurd under less serious circumstances.

Nothing more was said. For the first time, perhaps, in their lives, the family sat round the breakfast-table in painful silence. Mr. Vanstone's hearty morning appetite, like his hearty morning spirits, was gone. He absently broke off some morsels of dry toast from the rack near him, absently finished his first cup of tea—then asked for a second, which he left before him untouched.

"Norah," he said, after an interval, "you needn't wait for me. Magdalen, my dear, you can go when you like."

His daughters rose immediately; and Miss Garth considerably followed their example. When an easy-tempered man does assert himself in his family, the rarity of the demonstration invariably has its effect; and the will of that easy-tempered man is Law.

"What can have happened?" whispered Norah, as they closed the breakfast-room door, and crossed the hall.

"What does papa mean by being cross with me?" exclaimed Magdalen, chafing under a sense of her own injuries.

"May I ask what right you had to pry into your father's private affairs?" retorted Miss Garth.

"Right?" repeated Magdalen. "I have no secrets from papa—what business has papa to have secrets from me! I consider myself insulted."

"If you considered yourself properly reproved for not minding your own business," said the plain-spoken Miss Garth, "you would be a trifle nearer the truth. Ah! you're like all the rest of the girls in the present day. Not one in a hundred of you knows which end of her's uppermost."

The three ladies entered the morning-room; and Magdalen acknowledged Miss Garth's reproof by banging the door.

Half an hour passed, and neither Mr. Vanstone nor his wife left the breakfast-room. The servant, ignorant of what had happened, went in to clear the table—found his master and mistress seated close together in deep consultation—and immediately went out again. Another quarter of an hour elapsed before the breakfast-room door was opened, and the private conference of the husband and wife came to an end.

"I hear mamma in the hall," said Norah. "Perhaps she is coming to tell us something."

Mrs. Vanstone entered the morning-room as her daughter spoke. The colour was deeper on her cheeks, and the brightness of half-dried tears glistened in her eyes: her step was more hasty, all her movements were quicker than usual.

"I bring news, my dears, which will surprise you," she said, addressing her daughters. "Your father and I are going to London to-morrow."

Magdalen caught her mother by the arm in speechless astonishment; Miss Garth dropped her work on her lap; even the sedate Norah started to her feet, and amazedly repeated the words, "Going to London!"

"Without us!" added Magdalen.

"Your father and I are going alone," said Mrs. Vanstone. "Perhaps, for as long as three weeks—but not longer. We are going"—she hesitated—"we are going on important family business. Don't hold me, Magdalen. This is a sudden necessity—I have a great deal to do to-day—many things to set in order before to-morrow. There, there, my love, let me go."

She drew her arm away; hastily kissed her youngest daughter on the forehead; and at once left the room again. Even Magdalen saw that her mother was not to be coaxed into hearing or answering any more questions.

The morning wore on, and nothing was seen of Mr. Vanstone. With the reckless curiosity of her age and character, Magdalen, in defiance of Miss Garth's prohibition and her sister's re-

monstrances, determined to go to the study, and look for her father there. When she tried the door, it was locked on the inside. She said, "It's only me, papa;" and waited for the answer. "I'm busy now, my dear," was the answer. "Don't disturb me."

Mrs. Vanstone was, in another way, equally inaccessible. She remained in her own room, with the female servants about her, immersed in endless preparations for the approaching departure. The servants, little used in that family to sudden resolutions and unexpected orders, were awkward and confused in obeying directions. They ran from room to room unnecessarily, and lost time and patience in jostling each other on the stairs. If a stranger had entered the house, that day, he might have imagined that an unexpected disaster had happened in it, instead of an unexpected necessity for a journey to London. Nothing proceeded in its ordinary routine. Magdalen, who was accustomed to pass the morning at the piano, wandered restlessly about the staircases and passages, and in and out of doors when there were glimpses of fine weather. Norah, whose fondness for reading had passed into a family proverb, took up book after book from table and shelf, and laid them down again, in despair of fixing her attention. Even Miss Garth felt the all-pervading influence of the household disorganisation, and sat alone by the morning-room fire, with her head shaking ominously and her work laid aside.

"Family affairs?" thought Miss Garth, pondering over Mrs. Vanstone's vague explanatory words. "I have lived twelve years at Combe-Raven; and these are the first family affairs which have got between the parents and the children, in all my experience. What does it mean? Change? I suppose I'm getting old. I don't like change."

CHAPTER II.

At ten o'clock the next morning, Norah and Magdalen stood alone in the hall at Combe-Raven, watching the departure of the carriage which took their father and mother to the London train.

Up to the last moment, both the sisters had hoped for some explanation of that mysterious "family business" to which Mrs. Vanstone had so briefly alluded on the previous day. No such explanation had been offered. Even the agitation of the leave-taking, under circumstances entirely new in the home experience of the parents and children, had not shaken the resolute discretion of Mr. and Mrs. Vanstone. They had gone—with the warmest testimonies of affection, with farewell embraces fervently reiterated again and again—but without dropping one word, from first to last, of the nature of their errand.

As the grating sound of the carriage-wheels ceased suddenly at a turn in the road, the sisters looked one another in the face; each feeling, and each betraying in her own way, the dreary

sense that she was openly excluded, for the first time, from the confidence of her parents. Norah's customary reserve strengthened into sullen silence—she sat down in one of the hall chairs, and looked out frowningly through the open house-door. Magdalen, as usual when her temper was ruffled, expressed her dissatisfaction in the plainest terms. "I don't care who knows it—I think we are both of us shamefully ill-used!" With those words, the young lady followed her sister's example, by seating herself on a hall chair, and looking aimlessly out through the open house-door.

Almost at the same moment, Miss Garth entered the hall, from the morning-room. Her quick observation showed her the necessity for interfering to some practical purpose; and her ready good sense at once pointed the way.

"Look up, both of you, if you please, and listen to me," said Miss Garth. "If we are all three to be comfortable and happy together, now we are alone, we must stick to our usual habits and go on in our regular way. There is the state of things in plain words. Accept the situation—as the French say. Here am I to set you the example. I have just ordered an excellent dinner at the customary hour. I am going to the medicine-chest, next, to physic the kitchen-maid; an unwholesome girl, whose face-ache is all stomach. In the mean time, Norah, my dear, you will find your work and your books, as usual, in the library. Magdalen, suppose you leave off tying your handkerchief into knots, and use your fingers on the keys of the piano instead? We'll lunch at one, and take the dogs out afterwards. Be as brisk and cheerful, both of you, as I am. Come! rouse up directly. If I see those gloomy faces any longer, as sure as my name's Garth, I'll give your mother written warning, and go back to my friends by the mixed train at twelve-forty.

Concluding her address of expostulation in those terms, Miss Garth led Norah to the library door, pushed Magdalen into the morning-room, and went on her own way sternly to the regions of the medicine-chest.

In this half-jesting, half-earnest manner, she was accustomed to maintain a sort of friendly authority over Mr. Vanstone's daughters, after her proper functions as governess had necessarily come to an end. Norah, it is needless to say, had long since ceased to be her pupil; and Magdalen had, by this time, completed her education. But Miss Garth had lived too long and too intimately under Mr. Vanstone's roof to be parted with, for any purely formal considerations; and the first hint at going away which she had thought it her duty to drop, was dismissed with such affectionate warmth of protest, that she never repeated it again, except in jest. The entire management of the household was, from that time forth, left in her hands; and to those duties she was free to add what companionable assistance she could render to Norah's reading, and what friendly superintendence she could still exercise over Magdalen's music. Such

were the terms on which Miss Garth was now a resident in Mr. Vanstone's family.

Towards the afternoon the weather improved. At half-past one the sun was shining brightly; and the ladies left the house, accompanied by the dogs, to set forth on their walk.

They crossed the stream, and ascended by the little rocky pass to the hills beyond; then diverged to the left, and returned by a cross-road which led through the village of Combe-Raven.

As they came in sight of the first cottages, they passed a man, hanging about the road, who looked attentively, first at Magdalen, then at Norah. They merely observed that he was short, that he was dressed in black, and that he was a total stranger to them—and continued their homeward walk, without thinking more about the loitering foot-passenger whom they had met on their way back.

After they had left the village, and had entered the road which led straight to the house, Magdalen surprised Miss Garth by announcing that the stranger in black had turned, after they had passed him, and was now following them. "He keeps on Norah's side of the road," she added, mischievously. "I'm not the attraction—don't blame *me*."

Whether the man was really following them, or not, made little difference, for they were now close to the house. As they passed through the lodge-gates, Miss Garth looked round, and saw that the stranger was quickening his pace, apparently with the purpose of entering into conversation. Seeing this, she at once directed the young ladies to go on to the house with the dogs, while she herself waited for events at the gate.

There was just time to complete this discreet arrangement, before the stranger reached the lodge. He took off his hat to Miss Garth politely, as she turned round. What did he look like, on the face of him? He looked like a clergyman in difficulties.

Taking his portrait, from top to toe, the picture of him began with a tall hat, broadly encircled by a mourning band of crumpled crape. Below the hat was a lean, long, fallow face, deeply pitted with the small-pox, and characterised, very remarkably, by eyes of two different colours—one bilious green, one bilious brown, both sharply intelligent. His hair was iron-grey, carefully brushed round at the temples. His cheeks and chin were in the bluest bloom of smooth shaving; his nose was short Roman; his lips long, thin, and supple, curled up at the corners with a mildly-humorous smile. His white cravat was high, stiff, and dingy; the collar, higher, stiffer, and dingier, projected its rigid points on either side beyond his chin. Lower down, the lithe little figure of the man was arrayed throughout in sober-shabby black. His frock-coat was buttoned tight round the waist, and left to bulge open majestically at the chest. His hands were covered with black cotton gloves, neatly darned at the fingers; his un-

brella, worn down at the ferule to the last quarter of an inch, was carefully preserved, nevertheless, in an oilskin case. The front view of him was the view in which he looked oldest; meeting him face to face, he might have been estimated at fifty or more. Walking behind him, his back and shoulders were almost young enough to have passed for five-and-thirty. His manners were distinguished by a grave serenity. When he opened his lips, he spoke in a rich bass voice, with an easy flow of language, and a strict attention to the elocutionary claims of words in more than one syllable. Persuasion distilled from his mildly-curling lips; and, shabby as he was, perennial flowers of courtesy bloomed all over him from head to foot.

"This is the residence of Mr. Vanstone, I believe?" he began, with a circular wave of his hand in the direction of the house. "Have I the honour of addressing a member of Mr. Vanstone's family?"

"Yes," said the plain-spoken Miss Garth. "You are addressing Mr. Vanstone's governess."

The persuasive man fell back a step—admired Mr. Vanstone's governess—advanced a step again—and continued the conversation.

"And the two young ladies," he went on; "the two young ladies who were walking with you, are doubtless Mr. Vanstone's daughters? I recognised the darker of the two, and the elder as I apprehend, by her likeness to her handsome mother. The younger lady——"

"You are acquainted with Mrs. Vanstone, I suppose?" said Miss Garth, interrupting the stranger's flow of language, which, all things considered, was beginning, in her opinion, to flow rather freely. The stranger acknowledged the interruption by one of his polite bows, and submerged Miss Garth in his next sentence as if nothing had happened.

"The younger lady," he proceeded, "takes after her father, I presume? I assure you, her face struck me. Looking at it with my friendly interest in the family, I thought it very remarkable. I said to myself—Charming, Characteristic, Memorable. Not like her sister, not like her mother. No doubt, the image of her father?"

Once more Miss Garth attempted to stem the man's flow of words. It was plain that he did not know Mr. Vanstone, even by sight—otherwise, he would never have committed the error of supposing that Magdalen took after her father. Did he know Mrs. Vanstone any better? He had left Miss Garth's question on that point unanswered. In the name of wonder, who was he? Powers of impudence! what did he want?

"You may be a friend of the family, though I don't remember your face," said Miss Garth. "What may your commands be, if you please? Did you come here to pay Mrs. Vanstone a visit?"

"I had anticipated the pleasure of communicating with Mrs. Vanstone," answered this inveterately evasive and inveterately civil man. "How is she?"

"Much as usual," said Miss Garth, feeling her resources of politeness fast failing her.

"Is she at home?"

"No."

"Out for long?"

"Gone to London with Mr. Vanstone."

The man's long face suddenly grew longer. His bilious brown eye looked disconcerted, and his bilious green eye followed its example. His manner became palpably anxious; and his choice of words was more carefully selected than ever.

"Is Mrs. Vanstone's absence likely to extend over any very lengthened period?" he inquired.

"It will extend over three weeks," replied Miss Garth. "I think you have now asked me questions enough," she went on, beginning to let her temper get the better of her at last. "Be so good, if you please, as to mention your business and your name. If you have any message to leave for Mrs. Vanstone, I shall be writing to her by to-night's post, and I can take charge of it."

"A thousand thanks! A most valuable suggestion. Permit me to take advantage of it immediately."

He was not in the least affected by the severity of Miss Garth's looks and language—he was simply relieved by her proposal, and he showed it with the most engaging sincerity. This time, his bilious green eye took the initiative, and set his bilious brown eye the example of recovered serenity. His curling lips took a new twist upwards; he tucked his umbrella briskly under his arm; and produced from the breast of his coat a large old-fashioned black pocket-book. From this he took a pencil and a card—hesitated and considered for a moment—wrote rapidly on the card—and placed it, with the politest alacrity, in Miss Garth's hand.

"I shall feel personally obliged, if you will honour me by enclosing that card in your letter," he said. "There is no necessity for my troubling you additionally with a message. My name will be quite sufficient to recal a little family matter to Mrs. Vanstone, which has no doubt escaped her memory. Accept my best thanks. This has been a day of agreeable surprises to me. I have found the country hereabouts remarkably pretty; I have seen Mrs. Vanstone's two charming daughters; I have become acquainted with an honoured preceptress in Mr. Vanstone's family. I congratulate myself—I apologise for occupying your valuable time—I beg my renewed acknowledgments—I wish you good morning."

He raised his tall hat. His brown eye twinkled, his green eye twinkled, his curly lips smiled sweetly. In a moment, he turned on his heel. His youthful back appeared to the best advantage; his active little legs took him away trippingly in the direction of the village. One, two, three—and he reached the turn in the road. Four, five, six—and he was gone.

Miss Garth looked down at the card in her hand, and looked up again in blank astonishment. The name and address of the clerical-

looking stranger (both written in pencil) ran as follows:

Captain Wragge. Post-office, Bristol.

LONG-SEA TELEGRAPHS.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

In the present condition of public opinion as to submarine cables, there is not the slightest chance of inducing either a company or the government to risk a million or even half a million of money on long-sea cables. Unreasoning confidence has been succeeded by unreasoning distrust; private enterprise and the public purse have both been so severely taxed by the failures of rash ignorance and unscrupulous jobbery, that submarine-cable communications have fallen into undeserved disrepute. Yet it will not be difficult to show that, with existing materials and existing experience, properly employed, the most distant civilised regions may be brought into telegraphic communication with this country.

It is self-evident that telegraphic communication with our colonists and customers in Asia, Africa, and America is one of the most pressing wants of the age—a want which follows naturally the perfection of railroads and steamboats. The value of speed increases, with more than geometrical proportion, with distance. A letter from London to Liverpool will often be delivered as soon as a telegram, especially if sent very late in the day, but a telegram to Marseilles outstrips the express train by many hours; and a telegram to Bombay would be in advance of the mail by many days. For this reason we ought not to be content until America, India, and China, are brought within the influence of a system of telegraphs.

The art of constructing and working land electric telegraphs has been almost brought to perfection. Let the money only be subscribed, and mechanics and manufacturers can be found thoroughly able to make and work a system of telegraphs over any distance and any country in which man can exist. Not only has all Europe—including the vast Russian empire, the principal islands of the Mediterranean, and Egypt—been united by a system of telegraphs, but British India and the colonies of Australia possess systems of “winged wires,” which, passing through thousands of miles of deserts and forests, unite the principal towns and ports of those dependencies.

The formation of submarine telegraphs for use in deep seas is still in the stage of experiment. We have arrived at a point where the combination of various inventions already made, and the application of experience already gained, is required rather than any extraordinary inventive powers.

The problem of manufacturing, laying, and maintaining deep-sea telegraph cables over one thousand miles, is not—like the telescope, the safety-lamp, the steam-engine, or the locomotive railway—to be worked out by the efforts of any one man of genius vivifying the crude ideas

of his predecessors. It is a problem that can only be worked out by a number of minute and often individually insignificant improvements in various processes connected with manufacturing cables, by increased care and skill in selecting sea routes, and in laying down cables when properly made.

On the question of deep-sea telegraphy we are much in the position of Horace’s “brass-breasted hero” who first ventured on the ocean, or rather, perhaps, of the man—if there ever was such a man—who first thought of extending coasting to far-sea voyages, and of leaving familiar landmarks and ready shelter for an adventure of weeks on the trackless ocean. Ships, cables, sails, and stores for navigating the Mediterranean or the Red or the Indian seas were to be had, but it required a long accumulation of experience, and a long series of improvement, before what the French call the long-course voyage could be brought down to a reasonable average of safety and certainty.

The idea of electric telegraphs remained a philosopher’s toy until railways found a clear place for their development. They were only first tried on a working scale in 1839; and almost insuperable difficulties appeared to attend their use for even twenty miles. Several years elapsed before it was found possible to work with certainty over a hundred miles. Unlike most inventions of a scientific character, the failures in submarine telegraphs may be distinctly traced to over-confidence, the result of early success. The first submarine cable laid between and across the Straits of Dover was a complete success—it was, in fact, a fortunate accident—and sanguine speculators, without either science or practical skill, have again and again obtained subscriptions for submarine cables constructed on the rule of thumb, and utterly unsuitable for any situation except the exact line on which the Dover and Calais cable happened to fall.

Professor Wheatstone, to whom the world is more indebted for the perfection to which land telegraphs have been brought than to any man living, suggested submarine telegraphs so early as 1837. On the 6th February, 1840, before a Select Committee of the House of Commons on Railways, he stated, in answer to a question, that he considered it would be perfectly practicable to communicate by electric telegraphs between Dover and Calais. In 1845, he made it part of an agreement with the company to whom he and Mr. Cook sold their patents, that he should have assistance in carrying out a submarine cable project. But differences arose between the professor and the company, and nothing was done.

The manufacture of a newly-discovered substance—gutta-percha—and the invention of wire-twisted ropes, were necessary before it was possible to make an effective submarine telegraphic cable. The first attempts at land electric telegraphs were subterranean, and it was not until various plans for insulating wires underground (such as covering them with cotton

and tar, &c.) had failed, that the simple experiment of carrying an iron wire on poles in the air was adopted. Until very recently, the use of india-rubber as a covering for electric wires was altogether abandoned; gutta-percha was found, in spite of certain defects, more easy to apply, and more durable.

The first attempt at a submarine communication was not made until 1850, when a simple unprotected wire, covered with gutta-percha, was laid from Dover to Cape Grisnez, between Calais and Boulogne. This wire, although it failed the next day, proved the feasibility of the idea, and saved a concession granted by the French government. It was while this wire was being laid, that the plan of protecting the hemp covering of the gutta-percha by wire, was suggested by a passenger on board the ship that was laying it. In 1851, a cable, twenty-five and one-third miles in length, covered with iron wire, was laid from Dover to Calais, from the hulk of the man-of-war *Blazer*, towed by a tug. This cable fell short of the shore by half a mile, but as the half-mile was in shallow water, the job was successfully completed. This cable, although several times broken by ships' anchors, has been repaired, and has continued in working order ever since.

In the following year a cable was laid from Holyhead to Howth, which failed, as did an attempt to connect Port Patrick and Donaghadee. In 1853, a cable successfully laid between these ports placed England and Ireland in electric union. In the same year, four cables were laid between England and Holland (by Orfordness and Schevening); these have been repeatedly broken by ships' anchors, but have always been repaired and maintained in working order. The Dutch cables form important links in the history of submarine telegraphs, because they were the first cables lifted, spliced, and repaired, out at sea; and the success of the system then adopted for repairing these cables, and the experience gained by the engineer employed, Mr. F. C. Webb, has been the foundation of the art of repairing telegraph cables—an art on which, up to the present time, too little value has been laid.

In 1854, an English firm laid for the Mediterranean Company a cable over a length of one hundred and ten miles, between Spezzia, the naval port of Piedmont, and Corsica; and another, eleven miles long, from Corsica to the Island of Sardinia. These have remained in working order ever since. Between 1854 and 1855, two cables, of the same pattern as the Hague cables, were laid between Holyhead and Howth; one has been taken up, and the other, although repeatedly broken, has been repaired, and continues in use.

In 1850, England and Hanover were connected by a cable two hundred and eighty miles long, which continues in working order. In the same year, Liverpool and Holyhead—Weymouth, Alderney, Jersey, and Guernsey—St. Bee's Head and the Isle of Man—were severally connected by submarine cables. The Isle of Man failed the first week, was partially relaid,

and has stood ever since. The expense of repairing the Channel Islands cables has so far exceeded all reasonable hopes of profit, that they have been for the present abandoned to the use of zoophytes and marine algae.

In 1859, a cable was laid between Folkestone and Boulogne, which still remains in good working order. In the same year, Australia and Tasmania were united by a cable two hundred and forty miles in length, and, although one section of one-third, having been cut through on a rocky bed, had to be relaid in a more suitable channel, it continues to work satisfactorily.

In 1855, a wire, covered with gutta-percha, and unprotected, laid for the British government between Balaclava and Varna, continued to work until it was wilfully cut through: according to a camp story, by order of a French general worried to madness by the frequency of messages from Paris. A cable was also laid, about the same time, from Constantinople to Varna, for the Turkish government.

All these cables, except the one between Spezzia and Corsica, were laid in shallow seas. The instances in which cables have worked for any period in deep waters, are those of the Sardinian, one hundred and ten miles; the Newfoundland, to Cape Breton, eighty-five miles; the Dardanelles to Scio and Candia, four hundred and fifty knots; Athens to Syria, one hundred and fifty knots; Barcelona to Port Mahon, one hundred and eighty. On the other hand, the failures have been numerous, and in two of the greatest experiments, most disastrous in a financial point of view—so disastrous that, with them, further attempts at deep long-sea telegraphic communication were, for a long period, closed; neither the government nor private capitalists would listen to proposals, however well devised, for submarine cables.

The first attempt at laying the Atlantic cable was made in 1857. In 1858 three unsuccessful attempts were repeated, and on the 5th August, 1858, a cable was laid between Galway and Newfoundland. On the first attempt, a length of three hundred and eighty-five miles of cable was lost. The remaining quantity was then made up to three thousand miles, and eventually two thousand two hundred miles were laid, and about one hundred miles were brought home, the rest being lost in unsuccessful attempts. What this speculation really did, and why it was certain to fail, we shall presently explain.

When the Atlantic cable, after a brief loud sensation, at a vast expense, suddenly became dumb, capitalists, contrary to the expectations of the promoters, who had so rashly hurried the experiments, resolutely buttoned up their pockets, and declined to subscribe another shilling to long-sea telegraphs.

When, therefore, a telegraphic communication with India became an urgent political and commercial necessity, a dexterous company of speculators brought pressure to bear on a tottering government, and obtained an unconditional guarantee of four and a half per cent on eight hundred thousand pounds for fifty years for a

cable from Suez to Kurrachee, on the simple condition that each of the three sections into which it was divided should work for one month. That, at least, was what the agreement was found to mean, although the victims at the Treasury and the parliamentary public were under the impression that the month guarantee extended over the whole line, and, in excusable ignorance, concluded that a cable that worked for a month might, like the Dover cable, work for nine years. The dinners, the balls, the private theatricals, the fireworks with which, at Kurrachee and Aden, the hospitable garrison welcomed the presumed constructors of the cable which was to put London within a few hours of Calcutta were scarcely over, when it was discovered that first one link and then another had failed. Finally, it appeared that the British tax-payer had to pay thirty-six thousand pounds per annum for a cable that had never sent one complete message from Suez to Kurrachee.

The Red Sea job had the same fatal effect on the government goose as the Atlantic on the Stock Exchange goose—no more golden eggs were to be expected from either until something that appeared more new and true in submarine cables could be presented.

Under these circumstances, keenly feeling every day the need of interchange of electric messages with India and America, the government took the wise step of appointing a committee to examine into the whole question of submarine cables—a subject up to that period involved, as far as the non-professional world was concerned, in hopeless mystery. This committee included, amongst others, the late Robert Stephenson, Professor Wheatstone, William Fairbairn, George P. Bidder, the two Clarks—Edwin and Latimer. Mr. Stephenson died before the inquiry actually commenced, after having sketched out the course of proceedings and suggested the experiments it would be advisable to make.

A folio Blue-book of three hundred and twenty pages, two hundred and sixteen questions and answers, eighteen appendices, and many diagrams, contains a report of the evidence of forty-two witnesses of every degree and shade of commercial, speculative, scientific, mechanical, chemical, and manufacturing skill—engineers, patentees, sailors, professors, and concessionnaires.

The statistics of submarine telegraphs in April, 1861, stood thus: There had been laid eleven thousand three hundred and sixty-four miles of cables, but little more than three thousand were working. The failures included the Atlantic, two thousand two hundred; the Red Sea and India, three thousand four hundred and ninety-nine; the Sardinia, Malta, and Corfu, seven hundred; the Singapore and Batavia, five hundred and fifty miles—all, except the last, being laid in deep seas.

Shallow-water cables are laid in depths down to about one hundred fathoms, and are liable to injury from anchors, dredges, and strong cur-

rents. Deep-sea cables are laid out of reach of all such dangers, at depths beyond a hundred fathoms, and extending to miles. We have heard and almost forgotten all the fine things that were said about the Atlantic cable during the brief period of its supposed success; a few figures tell the tale of its actual results. It cost, from first to last, four hundred and sixty-two thousand pounds, which includes seventy-five thousand pounds paid to the projectors, besides the use of the ships lent by the English and American governments. It was worked from the 1st September to the 10th August, 1858, between Valentia and Newfoundland, for twenty-one days, and during these twenty-one days one hundred and twenty-nine messages were sent, containing one thousand four hundred and seventy-four words and seven thousand two hundred and fifty-three letters. From Newfoundland to Valentia it was worked twenty-three days, and there were sent two hundred and seventy-one messages of two thousand eight hundred and eighty-five words and thirteen thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight letters. Besides the exchange of compliments between our Queen and the President of the United States, and divers sensation paragraphs, there were two important official messages sent to Canada countermanding the sending of two regiments to England in the following words:

I. "August 31st, 1858. The Military Secretary of the Commander-in-Chief, Horse Guards, London, to General Trollope, Halifax, Nova Scotia. The Sixty-seventh Regiment is not to return to England." II. "The Military Secretary, &c., to General commanding at Montreal, Canada. The Thirty-ninth Regiment is not to return to England." On the 1st September, Valentia telegraphed C. W. Field, New York: "Please inform American government we are now in a position to do best to forward—" There the message stopped, and no more words were ever received from Newfoundland. There the great experiment and speculation ended.

The Red Sea and Indian cable never even exchanged a compliment between Kurrachee and Suez. It was laid in two portions: the first between Suez and Aden, the second between Aden and Kurrachee, at the mouth of the Hindius. The portion between Suez and Aden was laid in three sections: from Suez to Cosseir, two hundred and fifty-five nautical miles; from Cosseir to Suakin, four hundred and seventy-four miles; from Suakin to Aden, six hundred and twenty-nine miles. This was completed in May, 1859. The sections on the Aden and Kurrachee line were: from Aden to Hallain, seven hundred and eighteen miles; from Hallain to Muscat, four hundred and eighty-six miles; from Muscat to Kurrachee, four hundred and eighty-one miles. A portion of about seventy miles was laid in depths of from one thousand nine hundred to two thousand fathoms. The first portion, between Aden and Suez, was finished on the 28th of May, 1859; the second portion was completed in February, 1860. About the same time, the Aden to Suakin section

failed; then the Cosseir section, which had a fault from the first, failed. The Aden to Kurrahee remained a very short time in working order, two sections having numerous faults. Thus each of the separate sections worked for thirty days, and earned the contractor his money; but the whole cable never worked for thirty days.

The committee attributed the failure of the Atlantic enterprise to the cable being of a faulty design, manufactured without proper supervision, and handled without sufficient care. "It was defective from the first, and practical men ought to have known of the locality of the defects."

From the evidence, it appears that under the bargain with the four projectors who received seventy-five thousand pounds for their concession, one, as part of the bargain, made himself engineer chief, not having previously any experience in marine telegraphs; and another, a surgeon and amateur, with a theory, became the electrician of the company. The way in which the whole business was hurried is shown very characteristically by Mr. Whitehouse, one of the scientific witnesses. He said that he wanted to try some important experiments to test the capabilities of the cable, which would have occupied three months. When he had explained his views, Mr. Cyrus Field, one of the American commissioners, with his share of seventy-five thousand pounds in view, and "full of steam," cried, "Pooh! nonsense. Why, the whole scheme will be stopped; the scheme will be put back a twelvemonth; *cannot you say now that you know it will do?* We hope you are not going to stop the ship this way." And so on this principle the ships went to sea *with something that would do*, and did do enough to make Mr. Field and his fellow promoters great lions for a brief space.

In the same way the Red Sea cable never was perfect, and, if perfect, never fit for the climate. This was not extraordinary, for the gentleman who obtained the concession, and sold it to the company, had no experience in telegraphs, but became engineer to the company by virtue of his bargain, and as part of the purchase-money. The government having no competent engineering adviser, made a blind contract for an unconditional guarantee with the company, and the company, for want of competent engineering advice, virtually agreed that the contractors should make the rope and lay the rope as they pleased. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that the committee "consider that the India and Red Sea telegraph failed because the design of the cable was not suited to the climate or the bottom of the sea over which it had to be laid, and because the contractor was allowed to manufacture and lay it without proper supervision or control."

We do not dissect these wretched failures in order to give pain to any one, but to show that submarine cables in deep seas have not yet had fair play, and that, so far from there being any insuperable obstacle to laying them,

there is every reason to believe that, with proper care, submarine cable and mainland communications may be eventually established with our most distant possessions. But to execute such a task, the peculiarities of climate, the depth and character of the sea, and its bottom, must be studied in designing the cable. The cable must be laid under the orders of men of skill and experience. Such men are, we are happy to state, engaged to reinstate the telegraph with India, by a new company which has arisen out of the ashes of the Red Sea Telegraph Company. Advantage must be taken of every means for shortening the sea route, or the deep-sea route, as the case may be; and where in deep waters great risks are inevitable, bargains should be made with contractors which will render it their interest that the cables shall work, not a week or a month, but for as long a period, and as perfectly, as possible.

WORSE WITCHES THAN MACBETH'S.

DR. HARSNET described thus the "true idea" of a Bewitching Woman: "An old weather-beaten crone, having her chin and knees meeting for age, walking like a bow leaning on a staff, hollow-eyed, untooth'd, furrow'd on her face, having her lips trembling with the palsy, going mumbling in the streets: one that hath forgotten her pater noster, and yet hath a shrewd tongue to call a drab a drab. If she hath learn'd of an old wife in a chimney end Pax, Max, Fax for a spell; or can say Sir John Grantham's curse for the miller's eels:

All ye that have stolen the miller's eelis,
Laudate Dominum de Cœlis;
And all they that have consented thereto,
Benedicamus Domino:

why, then, look about you, my neighbours."

A heartier or more thorough way of making superstition hateful could not have been found, than that along which we are led in the complete series of Witch Stories lately put forth by Mrs. E. Lynn Linton. Taking the superstition of Scotland and England each in turn, Mrs. Linton tells the public the whole story of this form of credulity in its most cruel and stupid issues, conquering its monotony, as, out of a liberal and earnest mind, she pleads the cause of common sense and wholesome scepticism—still needing defenders against the sick appetite for clumsy marvels. The witches of old, who claimed to be real riders of broomsticks, got as much sensible help out of the supernatural master with whom they declared their compact, as the impostors of our day who swim the air in dark drawing-rooms, and "run" spirits of Socrates, Shakespeare, and the late Mrs. Grundy, equally charged with all the secrets of the solemn unknown world. There is a change in the form of delusion and in the characters and persons of deluders and deluded; luckily also there is a change in the treatment of the superstitious fever: the cold-water cure being considered preferable to cautery. A pretty thing it would be if, after enjoying the séance of spi-

ritualised broomstick at the Honourable Mrs. Idleness-the-Mother-of-Tomfoolery's, that clever and fascinating but too credulous friend were served up to us next week at breakfast among the roast women in the daily newspapers' Smithfield report. There is a certain stock of credulity, one would think, always abroad in the world, and the greater the quackery or the absurdity—the more emphatic the alleged experience, and the less tangible the evidence of its truth or trustworthiness.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was, as Mrs. Linton tells us, an epidemic witch panic of superstition formalised by James the Sixth of Scotland into a distinct section of the articles of human faith. The first Scotch witches on record are those whom St. Patrick offended, when they and their master, the devil—outraged by his rigour against them—tore off a piece of rock as the saint crossed the sea and hurled it after him: which rock became the fortress of Dumbarton. Then in the year nine hundred and sixty-eight, there was King Duff pining by reason of a waxen image which a young woman under torture accused her mother and certain other old women of having made, and those women were burnt. Then there was in the thirteenth century Thomas of Ercildoune, the rhymer and prophet, to whom is ascribed an extant romance of Sir Tristrem. He was "ane man of gret admiration to the peple and schaw sundry thingis as they fell." When Thomas sat one day under the Eildoun-tree, there came towards him a most beautiful damsel riding upon a grey palfrey. He begged her love: which she refused, because it would undo her beauty and make him repent. He would not be denied; so when he had the lady in his arms, her bright eyes became dead, her fair locks dropped from the naked scalp, her rich attire was changed to rags, and with that odious hag for companion the poor Thomas was forced to bid adieu "to sun and moon, to grass and every green tree," and mounting behind the palfrey of the enchantress, rush through darkness and the roaring of waters, also through a fair garden in which was the fatal tree of knowledge, to the point whence the three roads diverged, to heaven, hell, and fairy-land. To a gay castle in fairy-land, Thomas was taken by his guide, who had resumed all her beauty as the Fairy Queen. There, he dwelt three years, when, the day before the arrival of a fiend who would take tithe of the inhabitants of fairy-land and would be sure to seize him as a stately and fair person, he was carried back to the Eildoun-tree with many fairy secrets trusted to his telling; the fate of the wars between England and Scotland being among the number. To this and other legendary stories Mrs. Linton only alludes, and then, coming into the light of written history, begins the series of indubitable Scotch witch stories with the fate of Lady Glamis. The wife of John Lyon, Lord Glamis, it was as "one of the Douglasses" that her husband's near relative, William Lyon, whose suit of love when she became a young widow she

slighted, brought Lady Glamis to the stake. As a Douglas she was beyond the pale of judicial sympathy.

We have Bessie Dunlop's own word (given under torture on a November day, in the year fifteen 'seventy-six) for the fact that when she was weak after a confinement and weeping bitterly for the death of a cow, Tom Reid—killed years before at the battle of Pinkye, but then dwelling in fairy-land—came and comforted her, and, having made her acquaintance, at last took her clean away from the presence of her husband and three tailors—they seeing nothing—to where eight gentlemen and four pretty women dressed in plaids were waiting for her, and persuaded her in vain to go to fairy land. The queen of the fairies also, a stout comely woman, had sat on her bed and reasoned with her; but she stuck to her home and her honesty, only holding odd fairy gossip with Tom, who told her useful secrets of roots, and herbs, and drinks: so that she cured John Jake's bairn, and her gudeman's sister's cow, and tried her best, and Tom's best, without any success on old Lady Kilbowye's leg. For all this, the poor old woman who had done what good she could with herbs and simples was "convict and brynt."

A sorcerer of fame was John Fian, alias Cunningham, master of the school at Saltpan, Lothian, who was arraigned on the day after Christmas-day, in the year fifteen 'ninety, and strangled and burnt on the Castle Hill at Edinburgh, a month afterwards. Satan, said the indictment on which he was tried and convicted, appeared to him in white as he lay on his bed, musing and thinking how he should be revenged on Thomas Trumbill, for not having whitewashed his room according to agreement. After promising homage he received his master's mark, where it was on trial found under his tongue, by means of two pins therein thrust up to their heads. This wonderful man, amongst other of his achievements, was once seen to chase a cat, and in the chase to be carried so high over a hedge that he could not touch her head. So it was proved against him that he flew through the air. When asked why he hunted the cat, he said that Satan had need of her, and that he wanted all the cats he could lay hands on, to cast into the sea, and cause storms and shipwrecks. He was further accused of endeavouring to bewitch a young maiden; but, thanks to a wife of her mother's, practised his enchantment on the hair of a heifer. The result was, that a luckless young cow went lowing after him, even into his schoolroom, rubbing herself against him, and observing him everywhere with languishing eyes like a love-sick young lady. To make good the twenty counts of indictment against John Fian, persuasion to confess was applied by torture, until he became speechless; and his tormentors, supposing it to be the devil's mark which kept him silent, searched for that mark, that by its discovery the spell might be broken. So they found it, as stated before, under his tongue, with two charmed pins stuck up to their heads therein; the sign of success

being the cry extorted by that further pang. When able to speak, he procured relief by confessing as much as would satisfy his tormentors. The next day he recanted this confession. He was then somewhat restored to himself, and had mastered the weakness of his agony. Whereupon it was assumed that the devil had visited him in the night and had marked him afresh. They searched him, he was tortured afresh, and died denying all the fictions charged against him. Fian was one of the first human sacrifices to the odious superstition of the odious King James.

Another was the half-witted servant-girl of a deputy baillie, who, seeing his maid busy to "helpe all such as were troubled or grieved with anie kinde of sicknes or infirmitie," considered this conduct suspicious, and, without witness, judge, or jury, put her to torture on his own account, first with the "pillie-winks," or thumbscrews, then by "thrawing," binding, and wrenching her head with a rope. As she confessed nothing, she was searched by pricking with a pin, and the devil's mark was discovered on her throat. The point of discovery was the prick made when her endurance gave way; and she not only confessed, but implicated by her confession three other women, one of them the daughter of Lord Cliftonhall, one of the senators of the College of Justice. While we dip into Mrs. Linton's work, selecting and condensing, we use, as far as we can, the clever lady's own words, for it is hardly desirable that what is well said should be said worse. One of the women thus accused, Agnes Sampson, was a sober clever woman, whose repute for wisdom brought her to the mind of her accuser. She was carried before the king himself at Holyrood, and, as she denied all that was charged against her, she was fastened to the witch's bridle: an iron machine pressed over the head with a piece of iron thrust into the mouth, having four prongs, directed one to the tongue, one to the palate, one to either cheek; was kept without sleep, had her head shaved, and thraven with a rope; was searched and pricked, until she was goaded into edifying the royal inquisitor with such tales as he longed to hear. "She said," writes Mrs. Linton, "that she and two hundred other witches went to sea on All-Halloween, in riddles or sieves, making merry and drinking by the way: that they landed at North Berwick church, where, taking hands, they danced around, saying,

Commer goe ye before! commer goe ye!
Gif ye will not goe before, commer let me!

Here they met the devil, like a mickle black man, as John Fian had said, and he marked her on the right knee; and this was the time when he made them all so angry by calling Robert Grierson by his right name, instead of Rob the Rower, or Ro' the Comptroller. When they rifled the graves, as Fian had said, she got two joints, a winding-sheet, and an enchanted ring, for love-charms. She also said that Geillis Duncan, the informer, went before them playing

on the jew's-harp, and the dance she played was Gyllatripes; which so delighted gracious majesty, greedy of infernal news, that he sent on the instant to Geillis, to play the same tune before him; which she did 'to his great pleasure and amazement.' Furthermore, Agnes Sampson confessed that, on asking Satan why he hated King James, and so greatly wished to destroy him, the foul fiend answered: 'Because he is the greatest enemy I have;' adding, that he was 'un homme de Dieu,' and that Satan had no power against him. A pretty piece of flattery, but availing the poor wise wife nothing as time went on."

We pass over some years in Mrs. Linton's chronological series, and, in the middle of the seventeenth century, find many wretched women seized, tortured, and roasted on the accusation of a poor maniac. This wretched creature was a certain Hob Grieve, whose wife had been burnt for a witch twenty years before, and who was himself now doomed as a wizard. Even before torture, when he had filled a prison with his victims, one woman who had been accused by him, came, stung with wrath, to contradict and curse him, and at last in frenzy turned upon herself. Another poor woman, whom the magistrates really laboured to save, sought death as the desperate remedy for all the wretchedness that a mere accusation brought with it. "She had been fyled as a witch, she said, and as a witch she would die. And had not the devil once, when she was a young lassie, kissed her, and given her a new name? Reason enough why she should die, if even nothing worse lay behind. At last the day of her execution came, and she was taken out to be burnt with the rest. On her way to the scaffold she made this lamentable speech: 'Now all you that see me this day, know that I am now to die a witch by my own confession; and I free all men, especially the ministers and magistrates, of the guilt of my blood. I take it wholly on myself. My blood be upon my own head; and as I must make answer to the God of heaven presently, I declare I am as free of witchcraft as any child; but being delated by a malicious woman, and put in prison under the name of a witch, disowned by my husband and friends, and seeing no ground of hope of my coming out of prison or ever coming in credit again, through a temptation of the devil I made up that confession on purpose to destroy my own life, being weary of it, and choosing rather to die than to live.'"

England, even when represented by much of its best wit, was not before Scotland in these matters. As Mr. Crossley has said with only too much truth in the introduction to an old volume on the Discovery of Witches, edited by him: "We find the illustrious author of the *Novum Organum* sacrificing to courtly suppleness his philosophic truth, and gravely prescribing the ingredients for a witch's ointment; Selden maintaining that crimes of the imagination may be punished with death; the detector of Vulgar Errors, and the most humane of physicians giving the casting vote to the vacillating

bigotry of Sir Matthew Hale; Hobbes, ever sceptical, penetrating, and sagacious, yet here paralysed and shrinking from the subject, as if afraid to touch it; the adventurous explorer, who sounded the depths and channels of the 'Intellectual System' along all the 'wide-watered' shores of antiquity, running after witches to hear them recite the Common Prayer and the Creed, as a rational test of guilt or innocence; the gentle spirit of Dr. Henry More, girding on the armour of persecution, and rousing itself from a Platonic reverie of the Divine Life to assume the hood and cloak of a familiar of the Inquisition; and the patient and inquiring Boyle, putting aside for a while his searches for the grand Magisterium, and listening, as if spell-bound, with gratified attention to stories of witches at Oxford and devils at Mascon."

We have all heard of the wonderful discovery of witches in the county of Lancashire. The first of the "coven" tried was Mother Demdike: an old woman of eighty, living in Pendle Forest, a wild tract of land on the borders of Yorkshire, who had been a witch for fifty years, and had brought up children and grandchildren to the business, being "a general agent for the devil in all those partes." Twenty Pendle witches were accused, and twelve were hanged: the rest escaped, but most of them for a few years only. Twenty-one years later, in sixteen 'thirty-three, there was a second curse of Pendle proclaimed by the deposition of a boy of eleven years old. Painfully frequent in these histories is the judicial murder of poor women for witchcraft, on the faith of the wild inventions of young children. But in this case, the wise King James being no longer leader of the hunt, the accusations were narrowly sifted, and the boy at last confessed that his first batch of lies was invented, at his father's suggestion, to screen himself when he had been robbing an orchard of plums. As the first witch-stories had been so profitable as to bring his father two cows, he gave reins to his fancy, and went on to attack anybody within reach. Indeed, it was not only to Matthew Hopkins that witch-finding and inventing was a source of profit, though he, of all men, who in the course of business sent hundreds to the gallows, made a handsome living out of it. Hopkins's great business year was sixteen 'forty-five. In that year thirty-six were arraigned at one time, before one judge, and fourteen of them hanged. Even Hopkins, living among his crude stories of imps, like mice and moles, that brought fortune to the women who cherished and obeyed them, set a limit to the very mean wages given by the devil to his servants. "Six shillings," he said, in the examination of Joan Rucealver, of Powstead, Suffolk, "six shillings was the largest amount he had ever known given by an imp to his dame."

The last witch-fire kindled in Scotland was in seventeen 'twenty-seven, when a poor old woman accused of transforming her daughter into a horse to carry her to witches' meetings, and causing her to be shod by the devil, so that she was lamed in

hands and feet, being found guilty, "was put into a tar-barrel and burned at Dornoch in the bright month of June. 'And it is said that after being brought out to execution, the weather proving very severe, she sat composedly warming herself by the fire prepared to consume her, while the other instruments of death were getting ready.' The daughter escaped: afterwards she married and had a son who was as lame as herself; and lame in the same manner too; though it does not appear that he was ever shod by the devil and witch-ridden. 'And this son,' says Sir Walter Scott, in 1830, 'was living so lately as to receive the charity of the present Marchioness of Stafford, Countess of Sutherland in her own right.' This is the last execution for witchcraft in Scotland; and in June, 1736, the Acts Anentis Witchcraft were formally repealed."

The date of the last judicial execution for witchcraft in England, is seventeen 'twelve. Though, adds Mrs. Linton, to whose very curious and interesting volume we refer the reader for further information, "there is a report current in most witch books of a case at a later period—but I can find no *authentic* account of it—that, in 1716, of a Mrs. Hicks and her little daughter of nine, hanged at Huntingdon for selling their souls to the devil, bewitching their neighbours to death and their crops to ruin, and as a climax to all, taking off their stockings to raise a storm."

No one who is interested in this curious subject, should be without Mrs. Linton's admirable book.

RUSSIAN TRAVEL.

THE YEAMSCHEEK: ACROSS COUNTRY.

THE yeamscheek is a great Russian institution. He is not to be confounded, as is sometimes done by strangers, with the extortionate ruffian drosky, lauska, and britska drivers, in the streets of towns and cities, nor with the coachmen of the gentry and aristocracy. He is a distinct animal; the interior swarms with him; he "works" every macadamised and un-macadamised road in Russia, from the shores of the White to the shores of the Black Sea; and all roads are alike to him. Whether I make a bargain with one to take me to Siberia, or to the next town, it is all the same to him. He goes off to his gang, puts me into a hat, and I am drawn for. The fortunate drawer gets me for his job, and is responsible to the rest for his performance of the duty. I am quite safe with him; he will carry out his part of the bargain, if he can. The traveller, entirely at his mercy, over endless tracks and plains, through dismal forests, frost and snow, among wolves and bears, never distrusts the poor yeamscheek. He is neither a ruffian nor a robber, but simply a peasant, who commenced driving troikas at six years of age, and who will drive them till he dies. He has one failing, the need of vodka: give it him the traveller must, but let the traveller give it sparingly; and if you hit the right mean between parsimony and indiscretion as to this point, he will do anything for his charge

short of keeping awake when he is sleepy, merely because he drives. Considering the immensity of the country, the number length and character of the roads, and that the yeamscheek is the only reliable land-carrier for passengers and goods (excepting the few railways), the number of these men must be immense. They played no unimportant part in the Napoleon invasion, and in the transport of troops and material of war to the Crimea, and to write anything about interior travelling in Russia, without giving a few lines to the yeamscheeks, would be leaving Hamlet out of his own play.

Let no man imagine that he has tried Russian travel if he have merely visited Moscow and Petersburg, and run a few hundred versts on any of the few main well-kept roads. Wide of these, lies on both sides the interior life of this immense country, and to see it we must penetrate through forests seventy miles long, jolt over wave-like undulations of endless barren or poorly-cultivated land, and bid farewell to every vestige of macadam. In my case the deviation from the main road took place at no indicated point. No finger-post pointed the way, no road led to it.

"I want to go to Evanofsky."

"Well," said the yeamscheek, "that is the road."

"Where? I see no road."

"Ah, yes! but I'll find one." And with that he turned the horses' heads at right angles to the straight broad road we were on, lashed, screamed, and succeeded in plunging us across a deep wide ditch, into what appeared to me to be an endless pathless expanse of stubbled and unstubbed ground; tree, shrub, fence, post-house, or hut, there was none, to mark the route as far as the eye could reach. The frost tinged the expanse with white, and the wintry sun, as it shone with a cool light over the long sweeping undulations of the ground, made the surface of the land glisten like water. Some of us, indeed, could scarcely be persuaded that we were not about to plunge into some trackless pool, without compass, pilot, or chart. The inexperienced will always bid a regretful farewell to the beaten road, as to an old friend, and will face the trackless ground with uncomfortable notions about grizzly bears, wolves, ditches, precipices, and snow-storms. I confess that I lost sight of the black-and-white striped mile-post with some regret. Hitherto we had travelled with these posts and the telegraphic wires, constantly on our right and left, as mute friends and companions. We could read the number of versts on each post when we had nothing else to do, and we could think of human messages going and coming on the wires; but now they are gone on far to the south, keeping company with travellers on the one good broad road that leads to Odessa. As for us, we were over the ditch, and off through the fields.

The change was sudden and complete; but all changes are sudden and complete in Russia. Summer goes in a day, and winter comes. One

may cross a river in a boat at night, and walk back on the ice in the morning. Doors and windows stand wide open in summer for a breath of cool air, but in winter the cool air is barred out with double windows, triple doors, and heated stoves. So in regard to clothing; thin linen summer habiliments are thrown aside in a day, and the reign of furs begins. Wheels are upon all carriages of every sort one day, snow comes during the night, and the wheels all vanish; in the morning, nothing is seen but sledges. The transitions from class to class are of the same character. One class is of gentlemen and barons; the next step is to mouscheeks, peasant-serfs who live on black bread and salt, seasoned with sour cabbage and garlic, and who are covered with a dirty sheepskin instead of being clothed in ermine, sables, and fine linen. Cronstadt is reached from Petersburg by steamers in one week; in the next, the traveller runs over the same water with three horses before him. The people will leave a hot bath and plunge into a hole made in the ice; they will leave a room, heated to seventy or eighty degrees, and follow a funeral for six miles, with no covering on their heads, in a frost twenty-five degrees below zero; they will fast seven weeks on cabbage and garlic, and then guzzle themselves in a few hours into the hospital, take cholera, and die. Diseases are generally swift and fatal—to-day well, to-morrow dead. More than two-thirds of the cholera cases die. Women are interesting, plump, and marriageable, at fourteen; they are shrivelled at thirty. Despotic power works in extreme without control, religion without morality, commerce without honesty. There is land illimitable, without cultivation. There are splendid laws, and poverty of justice. Some of these contrasts are now being softened down by the wise progressive policy of Alexander the Second.

Off the beaten track it was that I first learned what yeamscheeks and horseflesh could accomplish. If our courage and confidence sank a degree, and we held on with bated breath as the tarantasses jolted over the deep ruts, ran on one wheel along the edge of a steep slope at an angle of forty-five, or plunged into a chasm with a crash, to be pulled out by the most desperate application of the whip, no such charge can be brought against the drivers; they seemed to rejoice in having quitted the monotonous road, and their spirits appeared to spring into new life with every obstacle. They had now got something to drive over—something worth being a yeamscheek for: "Go, my angels!" "Step out, my dear pigeons!" "Climb up, my sweet-heart!" And at every ejaculation down came the knout with terrible force and effect.

At one o'clock in the afternoon of the second day after leaving the main road, we came in sight of the end of our wanderings, on the slope of a long hill. We were obliged to pack up. The descent was steep, and looked extremely dangerous; the yeamscheeks, for the first time, paused before taking it. I got out to reconnoitre. On each side of us lay a dense and

gloomy forest of oaks, birch, and pines; the track down which we had come a certain length, had been evidently cut through the hill for nearly a mile and a half. Far below in the valley, lay a considerable number of what my servant Harry took to be peat-hills. Those were huts. I could see also the cupola of a church, the chimney of a mill, or works, and, on an adjoining eminence, a residence of some pretension. How to get down was a puzzle; the ground was slippery from ice, the descent long and precipitous, and the cattle were nearly exhausted: the last team having come twenty miles. If our men chose to go down with the usual clatter and dash (we had no drags) the result might be disastrous. The yeamscheeks, however, soon made up their minds to try the old way, and I could see no better way. They crossed themselves (their infallible resource), and were gathering up the ropes for a start, when a voice called out from the wood on the left, "Hold, hold! Do you want your necks broken, you fools?" I knew in a moment, from the manner in which the Russian was spoken, that this was the voice of an Englishman, and as he came struggling through the bushes and low underwood that lined the edge of the wood, his appearance did not belie his speech. He was short, fat, and florid; dressed in a fur coat, long boots, and fur cap; he carried a double-barrelled gun, and was followed by a man much in the same garb, but younger taller and stronger than himself. Two great shaggy cream-coloured wolf-dogs followed the second man, who carried a double-barrelled rifle, and had a large sheathed knife in his belt. While the one was collecting breath, after abusing the yeamscheeks for intending to gallop down the hill, the other came up to me, and after surveying us very deliberately, said, in the pure Doric of canny Scotland:

"I'm just thinkin', but maybe I'm wrang, that ye're no unlike kintramen of ours—that is, Englishmen, I mean?"

I acknowledged the proud relationship, and said,

"I seek a village called Evanofsky, and a man called Count Pomerin; can you help a countryman to find them?"

"Surely; the village is yonder in the glen, and the man is not far off. May I ask if ye are the party he wull be expecting from St. Petersburg. If sae, he wull be right glad to see you, but at the present moment it is impossible to get speech of him. We've a bit hunting on hand, you see, and Pomerin is at his post, as we were when you cam' betwixt us and our line of fire."

"God bless me!" I said, rather quickly; "are we betwixt the game and the rifles?"

"That's just precseely the position we have all the honour o' occupying at this present moment, and in half an hour after this it might not be unco' pleasant, but for that time, I think, we're safe, unless for a stray beastie or sae. Now, if you like to join the hunt, you and the other gent-le-man, I wouid advise you to send on the conveyances and contents to wait you at

Pomerin's; they will get a rayal welcome, and I shall send an escort with them." This being agreed on, he said to his friend, "Pins, whistle on that Dugal crature o' yours."

Mr. Pins put a whistle to his mouth and gave a shrill call, when presently a figure emerged from the wood, no inapt representative of the famous Dugal creature in Rob Roy. He had bandy legs, a great mass of tangled red hair on his head and face, red ferret eyes, and he dressed in a felt coat which reached only to the knees, a wolf-skin cape, and large boots, a world too wide for him; and a short-handed axe stuck in his belt. Mr. Saunderson had made some sign which I did not observe, that brought his henchman, a man of like sort, also to the spot. These having received their orders, proceeded to drag the wheels. In a few minutes two young trees were cut down, and, having been chopped into the right length, were thrust between the spokes and across the hind-wheels of the carriages. Having thus effectually put on a safety-drag, the two 'Dugal creatures,' large and small, mounted beside the drivers, but Harry and I remained behind with the ammunition, guns, and pistols, and then the vehicles began sliding down the hill without us, in a very comfortable manner.

WITH THE HUNSMEN.

I had often heard of a hunt in the interior, and was glad, although fatigued, to join one. The plan is something akin to the ancient practice of deer-hunting in the Scottish Highlands. In the present case, however, the game was different: not deer, but wolves, bears, foxes, and other vermin, which had been found very destructive and troublesome for some time past. The greater number of the men of several villages, including every man who could handle a gun, had turned out. I attached myself to Mr. Saunderson, Harry joined Mr. Pins, and we followed our new acquaintances into the wood from which they had come upon us. On entering, I could see that preparations had been made on a large scale. Just inside the wood, and extending a long way—perhaps to near the bottom of the hill to the left, and for a less distance to the right—men armed with guns, rifles, pistols, knives, old scythes, and other such weapons, were stationed thirty yards or less apart from one another, while, behind each, a horse was picketed to a tree. Many of the principal rifle and armed men, like my friends Pins and Saunderson, had 'Dugal creatures,' or peasant-serfs attached to them, having in charge dogs, horses, and other accessories. The whole party formed two lines, probably a mile and a half long; the first line armed; behind it, the unarmed and the horses. On the opposite side of the road, and on the trees in front, was a strong net, ten or twelve feet high, extending up and down hill, as far as I could see, parallel with the road, leaving the road itself convenient for the work of slaughter, while the men might fire into the net at pleasure from the cover, advance into the open, or mount and run in case of danger. How the net was secured, or what resistance it might make

against a large infuriated animal, I had no means of knowing; but I imagined that though it might hinder or entangle, it could not stop, or offer any effectual bar to a bear, or even a strong maddened wolf.

My companion enlightened me on sundry points: How, I asked, did they get the game into the net?

That was easily managed. Six hundred men had been sent early that morning into the opposite wood, at a point four or five miles from our present position; these men had spread themselves in a line across the wood, the two flanks gradually advancing faster than the centre, so as to form a curve by the time they reached the road where the net was placed, the flanks touching the ends of the net; then the centre advancing, drove all the game which was in front of them, right into the toils to be shot down. These men carried poles and other instruments for making all kinds of hideous noises, and the number of them being large, the whole wood became a perfect Babel of dreadful sounds, which frightened and daunted the doomed animals.

"This is an inglorious system of hunting, only worthy of barbarians."

"Oo' I; but ye ken the Russians can only operate in the mass way—that is, when they have plenty to keep them company. Besides, there is sometimes a bit hand to hand struggle, to vary the thing."

"Where is Count Pomerin?"

The count was down the hill, on the left flank, and commanded that side, while he (Saunderson) held the like position on the right up the hill. Pomerin's post was reckoned the more dangerous, as the chief haunts of the vermin were well known to be down the hill. Pomerin, he continued, was a dead shot, and always on those occasions took the post of danger. He was a gentleman every inch of him; "a wee thing over fast, ye ken; but he's young; and then his grandfather died last year, and left the laddie three millions of roubles, besides this immense estate, with the ten thousand bodies on it, two sugar manufactories, our vodka works, and the cotton-mill. When Mr. Saunderson cam' here, some years ago, the auld man was hale and weel, and this young man—whose father got a trip to Siberia and never cam' back—was the grandfather's pet. The young lad's mother was a serf, a bonny winsome thing, it is said; she's no ugly yet; she and her family were freed, and she was highly educated at Moscow, before and after her marriage; still this marriage was a cause of trouble. The proud aristocrats shut their doors on the pair of them. He fell into a revengeful spirit, and began writing papers on political economy, meaning to publish them abroad. Spies were in his house. Every line he wrote, and every word he said, they reported to the police, and so the end was that he vanished one night, and noo' they just say he is dead. No expense has been spared on the son's education; he can gabble in French, German, Italian, and all other

modern languages; he has travelled in France, England, and Italy. He has a stud of horses, and keeps a table like a prince: but oh! man, I've been told that he was spinning the auld man's bawbees last winter in Petersburg in fine style! If ye're a friend of his, gie him a canny advice to haud a better grup o' the siller. At this present time he is negotiatin' wi' a widow-woman, a 'generalshee,' to buy her bit estate. Her steward is a big rascal, an' Pomerin will pay grandly if he does not mind his hand. I ken what I ken, aboot that place, and he might do waur than tak' my counsel aboot it."

"Who is your friend Pins?" I asked.

"Pins," he said; "a poor cotton-spinning, ignorant, upsetting couff, but as sly and sleekit as a fox. He has managed to get Pomerin to quit four years of arrears of rent and his workers obrak; and he is tryin' to persuade his landlord to build a great cotton-mill, and send him to England to buy the machinery. The commission he'll get on that, is worth ten years of his present wee place."

"But," I said, "that might be a good investment for the count."

"Na, na, it's ower far to bring the cotton, and to send the yarn to market; there's no rail-ways here, to every town, like England; and there's no outlet for it in other countries, the demand is limited, and pretty well supplied now. If the count is wisely advised, or would tak' a practical man's advice, like mysel', he will invest his money in a safer channel. Let him cultivate his ground; our auld mother earth is a generous and fruitful lass, if she is well nourished. If he will manufacture, let him use the material his land produces. There's flax and hemp, at the door; there's beetroot for sugar, and rye for bread, and vodka. He'll want machinery, nae doot, for these—corn-mills, saw-mills, and agricultural implements; but he can sell the ropes and yarn, the vodka and the sugar, without trouble or expense. These large cotton-mills about Moscow, and Petersburg, are doing well at present—not so long after the war. But just suppose cotton was to grow scarce, or there was war with America, or amongst the Yankees themselves—not unlikely—or suppose the government was to take the duty off the imported manufactured goods, there is not one of these manufactories would be worth auld iron. It's not a good doctrine of political economy, and it will bring its recompense some day, to rob the poor moushick bodies, who are the chief consumers of the cotton cloth, to enrich a few foreign machine-makers, capitalists, and agents. The extra wages given to the workpeople is no equivalent for the enormous prices taken from them; besides, they don't get the benefit of the extra wages. It only goes into the pockets of the greedy barons whose slaves they are, while the estates are lying uncultivated, and the serfs are as poor and miserable as ever."

"But still," I said, "these manufactories are good civilisers. They require intelligence and skill in the workpeople, and this is much wanted in Russia."

"Civilisation in Russian cotton-mills! Hot-beds of vice, and corruption! Whair hae ye been to speak that gate? I could tell ye something about that. But,—hear to that!"

Sounds from the six hundred men in the wood had long since been heard, increasing in volume but now they had become deafening, and indicated the very near approach of the sport. Halloaing, shouting, yelling, whistling, blowing of horns, and a din of as heavy blows on iron kettles, formed a discordant chorus, and so loud that I could hardly hear the latter part of Mr. Saunderson's lecture on Political Economy. But his "hear to that," referred to a rifle-shot, immediately followed by a clattering of shots all down the line. I looked across the road, and could see the net vibrating, bulging, and in some places coming down, entangling heavy bodies in its meshes. Two large wolves, strong, and apparently fat, followed by a third, made their way cautiously at first from below the net, and then jumped into the road. Three or four shots went off at the same moment, but only one wolf dropped, the other two made as if for the wood on our side, but seemed to scent danger in that direction, for they turned round and tore up the hill at rattling speed. "Don't fire," shouted Saunderson; "let off the dogs!" And immediately four noble dogs sprang into the road, right in front of our position. One wolf was caught in a moment by the first two dogs, but the other ran into the wood, hotly followed by the other couple. Pins was reloading, when the three animals dashed amongst his legs, and upset him as they passed. I can only relate what I myself saw. A deer, or elk, with magnificent broad horns, cleared the net at a bound, right in front of us. "Now," said the Scotchman, "that's my quarry." The animal had scarcely touched the ground when a bullet struck him in the brain, and down he went. This was the first shot he had fired, and he hastily reloaded, for, he said, he fully expected bears. At this time a horseman on a splendid English hunter dashed up the open steep, and the firing abated. "That's Pomerin, what's he after? He'll get shot," said Saunderson. As he approached our position, he shouted in English, "Two large bears are heading up the wood inside the net, and the men are falling back; they will escape if we don't mind. Mount and follow who will." Saunderson was on his horse in a moment, and after the young man up the hill. Turning to look for Pins, and Harry, I saw Pins, the picture of fear, behind a tree. As I came up he was imploring Harry to help him on his horse, that he might quit the field; his own man had not returned. "Blow me if I do," said Harry. "But I'll take the loan of it. And here, old cock, take my blunderbuss, and I'll just try your rifle on a Rooshian bear." Whereupon he coolly took Pins's rifle out of his awkward hands, untied the horse, jumped on his back, and was after Saunderson before I could have stopped him, which I certainly did not intend to do. Had I been as well mounted and armed I should have followed: as it was, I was

condemned to inactivity, and the society of Mr. Pins.

The shots were still rattling off down the hill, several horsemen had passed in pursuit of the bears immediately after Harry left, and in a short time the rest of the huntsmen advanced into the open road to get to closer quarters with the game in and behind the net. I also left the cover, saw them fire several volleys ingloriously at the prostrate and entangled animals, and was about to examine the effects of their firing by going close up to the net, when a low growl, then a loud savage howl, issued from behind, and immediately a bear burst through an opening into the road among the men; as if disdain to touch them, he turned again and faced the wood whence he had come, and where he knew his pursuers to be. The rifles on our side were all unloaded, so that he deliberately sat for a short time in the middle of the road untouched. I was just on the point of trying the effect of revolver shot, and had made a few steps to get a proper and sure aim, when Saunderson rode from the wood, and drew up not twenty feet from the poor surrounded beast. He raised his rifle and fired, and the bear fell. The men, who had been all scampering off, returned to finish him with their knives, but Saunderson cried out, "Keep back, he's not dead; he will comb some of your hair if you don't mind!" He spoke too late. One man, more daring than the others, had stooped down to run his knife into the bear's throat, when, with astonishing swiftness, bruin raised himself to a sitting position, and darting his great paw, armed with those formidable talons, at the man's head, tore down cap, hair, skin, and flesh to the elbow. The man fell forward on the bear—in fact, into his arms—and was about to experience one of those deadly hugs, or embraces, which would have put him out of all pain, but a bullet from the same hand that first struck him put an end to the bear's power of mischief. The wounded man sprang up, and with a piercing shriek ran down the hill. He was ultimately carried home, and survived, but was for life frightfully disfigured.

The six hundred men who had been making the noises, and driving the game into the net, began to assemble in the road, and gather together the spoil. The dogs came wagging their tails, some with their fangs dripping and bloody, and their sides and heads showing rather severe wounds.

"Ah, Barbose, Burlak, my lads, you've done your part nae doot. But, God help us! where's Pomerin, and that body Pins, and that great big Englishman of yours?"

"As for Pins," I said, "I left him in the wood, but I must inquire of you where the other two are."

"Me! I ken whaur I left them, but it's no easy saying whaur they may be now. Come on and search; ye see, the bears divided as we headed them. I and two other men kept close on this one as he skirted the edge of the wood; twice he turned to offer battle, but took the

roe. The other two men fired at him, and missed; at the last fire he bolted into the road, then I got a clear shot, and had my nag not moved, that shot would have finished him. Pomerin and your man Harry have followed the other bear. I hope they are all safe."

He had left his horse, and we penetrated a good way into the forest, accompanied by a few men, Saunderson leading. So we came to a glade almost bare of trees. In the centre of this, he said, there was a large deep dell half a mile across, the sides sloping into the centre, and dense with trees all over. "Here it is; and as I live here's the horses tied to a tree. Living or dead they are here."

Although the foliage had fallen, the place looked dark and dismal, and just as we reached it two shots were heard in the hollow, the one a moment or two after the other. Down we rushed, sliding among the damp old leaves, and holding on by tree-trunks and branches. At length, in answer to our shouts, we heard a halloo repeated. This led us to the very bottom of the immense pit, and there stood Harry, fast in the embrace of the young Russian. Their guns were on the ground, and the bear lying dead beside them. As soon as Pomerin saw me, he sprang forward, embraced, and kissed me with emotion. He was much excited, and in answer to our questions, told us that, not thinking what he was about, he followed the bear down into this awful hole:

"I had fired twice at him, and hit him once, but not fatally. The villain seemed to know that both barrels were empty, for he turned at bay on this spot, a fine place for a game at hide-and-seek with a bear. I dodged him round and round the trees a good while, and having no time to load, threw my gun down. At last he got me in a corner, from which I could not move but in one direction, and that was into his arms. You see this tree; behind it is, you perceive, sheer cliff, on both sides a gulley. Well, I got behind the tree; the bear advanced, sure of his prey, no doubt. I stared him steadily in the face as he came on, but on he came; he was within five yards of me. I drew my knife; I had no hope of success; for, see, he is an enormous grizzly. Ah, the horror of that moment! I was just waiting his next step, and my eyes were dancing with fire-sparks, when I heard a voice from the cliff behind me, 'Lie down on yer belly, flat—quick; and I'll give the buffer somethink to eat harder nor gentlemen's flesh.' Ah! God bless my grandfather for teaching me the English language! These words were the sweetest I ever heard in my life. Down I went, flat on the ground; the bear had taken a step or two forward, and was looking up to the cliff, for I kept my eyes on him. I could now almost feel his breath on my face, when, in a moment, ping, whirr, then in another moment, ping, whirr, went the bullets, ripping over me, right into the bear's head. Over he went, rolling down the steep. Down jumped my preserver to my side, and

I've been hugging him like a bear ever since."

He turned to repeat the dose, but Harry set off with a "No more o' that ere."

When we returned to the scene of the main slaughter, we found the road filled with peasants—those who had been beating up the game, those who had been shooting it, the dog and horse attendants, and a crowd of idlers from the village. The game—consisting of the two bears, four cubs, two deer or elks, five large and two small wolves, hares, rabbits, and other small animals in abundance—was given over to the peasants, except only the two bears, which were ordered to be taken to the count's residence. I should have expected that the peasants would have made some demonstration of joy at the deliverance of their young master, which was known to them all by this time, but nothing of the kind took place. A few of them, indeed, came forward and kissed his hand, and said, "Thank God, he was safe," but these, I could perceive, were his domestic retainers and attendants. They were better dressed and cleaner than the generality of the peasants, and looked like the pampered and favoured menials that they were. Amongst the others, I in vain looked for any expressions of interest. Here was the raw material, and in the right spot for studying it. The excitement of the sport, in which every one might be expected to share to some degree, did not seem to have ignited in these people one spark of emotion. There was nothing to remind me of the peasantry of my own happy land, even in their worst times. I saw no smiling happy faces, no sparkling glad eyes, no manly blunt fellow officiously pressing forward to be taken notice of, no division of class into farmers and farmers' men, traders, and ploughmen, no evidence at all of degrees in the social scale, no appearance whatever of a thriving happy or contented ignorance, even among the serfs, no pride of clanship in the daring courage and appearance of their chief. Yet he appeared to me to have—in fact, I know he possessed—all that was requisite to call it forth had it been there. No. They showed themselves, as we moved forward and amongst them, stolid, apathetic and listless. Caps came off, certainly, and way was made for us with alacrity. But if they had any feelings at all they managed very cunningly to hide them. Their faces were in general good in contour, and their individual features regular, some of them handsome. The out-door workers were brown or swarthy, and those who attended the in-door manufactories, pale and sallow. As to height, bone and muscle, they seemed very fairly developed. The Russian peasant men are, indeed, the finest in the country, many of them models of manly shape and beauty. One thing struck me as very remarkable, the brilliant whiteness and regularity of their teeth. They were, as a rule, white as the purest ivory, and perfect in form. This is ascribed, I find, to the eating of black bread. Yet, notwithstanding all these favourable points, the ex-

pression on their faces was stupid, dull, and unmeaning; what expression there was, I could connect only with cunning and distrust.

SINGING TO SOME PURPOSE.

THE caprice which has caused so many of the Italian painters to forego their paternal names, and live renowned under accidental ones, was notably instanced in the case of Carlo Broschi, the celebrated Neapolitan singer, who is generally known to the world as the famous Farinelli. More than one reason has been assigned for this harmonious substitution; the most probable being that Carlo Broschi adopted the name of Farinelli out of gratitude for the protection he received from the family of Farina, musical amateurs almost as locally celebrated as he—their possible descendant—who lived at Cologne, “gegenüber dem Jülichs-Platz,” amidst a host of unworthy pretenders.

This wonderful soprano was born at Naples on the 24th of January, 1705, and though he received his first lessons in singing from his father, the great composer Porpora was his real instructor. Porpora's system of teaching, like that of Bernacchi of Bologna, and of all the Italian masters during the first half of the eighteenth century, consisted in the mechanism of the vocalisation, all the difficulties of which had to be surmounted before the pupil was permitted to think of the meaning of the words or the expression of the musical phrase. In that heroic age of the art of singing and the birth of scientific melody, the virtuosi admired before all other things the material purity of the sound, the flexibility of the organ, and that long-drawn breath which allowed the singer to disport like a bird with his voice; and never was soprano endowed with these brilliant qualities in the same degree as Farinelli. In proof of this we have the contemporaneous statement which Dr. Burney has recorded in the following terms:

“No vocal performer of the present century has been more unanimously allowed by professional critics, as well as general celebrity, to have been gifted with a voice of such uncommon power, sweetness, extent, and agility, as Carlo Broschi, detto Farinelli. Nicolini, Senesino, and Carestini, gratified the eye as much by the dignity, grace, and propriety of their action and deportment, as the ear by the judicious use of a few notes within the limits of a small compass of voice; but Farinelli, without the assistance of significant gestures or graceful attitudes, enchanted and astonished his hearers by the force, extent, and mellifluous tones of the mere organ, when he had nothing to execute, articulate, or express. But though during the time of his singing he was as motionless as a statue, his voice was so active, that no intervals were too close, too wide, or too rapid for his execution. It seems as if the composers of these times were unable to invent passages sufficiently difficult to display his powers, or the orchestra to accompany him in many of those which had been com-

posed for his peculiar talent. And yet, so great were his forbearance and delicacy, that he was never known, when he was in England, to exclaim or manifest discontent at the inability of the band or mistakes of individuals by whom he was accompanied. He was so judicious in proportioning the force of his voice to the space through which it was to pass to the ears of his audience, that in a small theatre at Venice, though it was the most powerful, one of the managers complained that he did not sufficiently exert himself. ‘Let me, then,’ says Farinelli, ‘have a larger theatre, or I shall lose my reputation, without your being a gainer by it.’ On his arrival here, at the first private rehearsal at Cuzzoni's apartments, Lord Cooper, then the principal manager of the Opera under Porpora, observing that the band did not follow him, but were all gaping with wonder, as if thunder-struck, desired them to be attentive; when they all confessed that they were unable to keep pace with him: having not only been disabled by astonishment, but overpowered by his talents. . . . There was none of all Farinelli's excellences by which he so far surpassed all other singers, and astonished the public, as his *messa di voce*, or swell; which, by the natural formation of his lungs, and artificial economy of breath, he was able to protract to such a length as to excite incredulity even in those who heard him, who, though unable to detect the artifice, imagined him to have the latent help of some instrument by which the tone was continued, while he renewed his powers by respiration.”

At seventeen years of age, Farinelli was already called “*un ragazzo divino*” (a divine youth), and Naples witnessed his departure with the deepest regret, when, in 1722, he accompanied his master, Porpora, to Rome, where the composer had undertaken to write an opera for the Aliberti Theatre. There was at this time in Rome a performer on the trumpet, a German, whose prodigious skill excited the public to enthusiasm; and in order, if possible, to increase that enthusiasm, and still further excite the general curiosity, the manager of the theatre proposed to Porpora that he should write an air with a trumpet accompaniment, in which the young Neapolitan soprano should contend with the far-reaching instrument. According to the wish of the impresario, Porpora wrote the required aria. It began with a ritornello, in which was introduced a lingering note, to be commenced by the trumpet and taken up afterwards by the singer; then came the principal motive, which each of the rivals was to repeat in his turn. The trumpet opened the note in question with extreme sweetness, gradually increased its volume, and held it suspended beyond the chord, keeping it there for an infinite time, to the astonishment of the listening public. Farinelli, without being in the slightest degree disconcerted, seized—so to speak—the ball at the hop, played with the privileged note, and gently endowing it with force, warmth, and life, suspended it yet longer in space, dazzling the ear and the imagination of the audience. Frantic

applause followed, and Farinelli was obliged to wait for some moments before he could go on; he then sang the first part of the air, with a luxury of trills and fancies so extraordinary that the firmness of the German artist was almost shaken. The instrumentalist, however, replied to the singer with a talent which balanced the success of his young and seductive rival; but when Farinelli had to repeat the second part of the air, he caused it to undergo so many transformations, and enriched it with so many marvellous beauties, that the entire voice of the theatre proclaimed him the victor in this remarkable melodious duel, and so excited were his listeners that on his leaving the house they followed him with acclamations home.

This success at Rome completely established Farinelli's vocal reputation. In 1724 he was heard with equal delight at Vienna; in the following year at Venice, and in his native city; and after successively enchanting the Milanese and the Romans once more, went, in 1727, to Bologna, where he encountered the great soprano, Bernachi—a meeting which wrought a most beneficial effect on Farinelli's artistic career. Bernachi, whom his contemporaries called "The King of Singers," was a pupil of Pistochi, the founder of a celebrated school at Bologna, and assiduously cultivated the teaching of his master. Farinelli made his debut at Bologna in an opera, in which he had to sing a duo with Bernachi, whose voice was neither brilliant nor of great compass. Porpora's wonderful pupil, who had only to show his graceful figure and pleasing face to prepossess the audience in his favour, began by a display of all the florid and ingenious exercises of fancy which had proved so successful at Rome, enrapturing all who heard him; but when the tumult subsided which he had created, Bernachi took up the air, and sang it with so much taste and absence of artifice, imprinting on it the stamp of so much simplicity and sentiment, that his young rival was moved by it to tears, and joining in the public applause, confessed himself vanquished. So completely did he acknowledge his defeat, that during the whole time he remained in Bologna he constantly sought the advice of Bernachi. After this *épreuve*, Rome, Naples, Parma, and Venice were severally the scenes of his triumphs, though he had there to measure himself with rivals no less formidable than the sopranists Gizzi, La Cuzzoni, and La Faustina, with whom he afterwards contended in London. In 1731, Farinelli again visited Vienna, and was warmly welcomed by the Emperor Charles the Sixth, the father of Maria Theresa, who, whatever his abilities in other respects, was a distinguished musical connoisseur, and capable of giving very good professional advice. This prince was himself no mean performer on the clavier—the pianoforte of that day—and one day, when he was accompanying Farinelli, astonished at his prodigious powers of ornamentation, he said: "You are much too prodigal of your great gifts; it would be far more worthy of your great talent if you refrained from that excess of embellish-

ment which disfigures the thought of the master and only surprises the senses, and confined yourself to the task of producing emotion by simpler means." This reproof was not lost upon Farinelli, but contributed, with the lesson which he had received from Bernachi, to render him the pathetic and touching singer so admired in London and at the court of Spain.

It was in 1734 that Farinelli, already famous and rich, came to England, to increase his fame and add to his riches. Two Italian theatres at that time disputed the favour of the London public—one of them conducted by the great composer, Handel, the other by his inveterate foes, who had enlisted Porpora against him. To render the struggle more equal, Porpora procured an engagement for Farinelli, who made his first appearance in an opera by Hasse, called *Artaxerxes*, in which was introduced an air composed for him by his brother, Richard Broschi. This air began by an effort of that sustained note of Farinelli's which had made him triumphant over the German instrumentalist at Rome, and if the pit did not actually "rise at him," the whole house was in a transport of delight throughout the representation, and Farinelli became the idol of the town. Summoned to court, he was accompanied on the clavier by one of the royal princesses, and, amongst the presents heaped upon him, the newspapers of the day relate that "his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was pleased to make a present of a fine wrought gold snuff-box, richly set with diamonds and rubies, in which was enclosed a pair of brilliant diamond knee-buckles, as also a purse of one hundred guineas, to the famous Signor Farinelli, who had constantly attended all his Royal Highness's concerts since he came from Italy." The lucky singer gained, in the course of his three years' visit to England, no less than five thousand pounds—a prodigious sum a hundred and thirty years ago, but a mere trifle now.

Paris was Farinelli's next halting-place, where Louis the Fifteenth gave him his royal portrait set in diamonds, and five hundred louis to boot; but highly as he was appreciated in France, a higher and more brilliant position awaited him in Spain.

It was upon no invitation to Madrid, but simply because he wished to see that capital, that Farinelli went to the country, where he remained for five-and-twenty years, loaded with honours by two successive monarchs, and enjoying the power of a favourite, if not the authority of a minister. The year 1737 had opened badly for the court of Spain, to say nothing of the kingdom. Philip the Fifth, the feeble, bigoted descendant of the "Grand Monarque," and transmitter of feebleness and bigotry to all of his race, the second branch of the Bourbons, had fallen into a sort of lethargy—as Falstaff calls it, "a kind of sleeping of the blood"—from which nothing could rouse him. He passed whole days in his apartments, in sadness and silence, entirely neglecting his person, and utterly indifferent to public affairs. To distract

his sombre thoughts—or rather to make him think, if it were in him to do so—his wife, Elizabeth Farnese, bethought her of the marvellous gifts of Farinelli. How they were applied, Dr. Burney thus describes:

"It has often been related, and generally believed, that Philip the Fifth, King of Spain, being seized with a total dejection of spirits, which made him refuse to be shaved, and rendered him incapable of attending council or transacting affairs of state, the queen, who had in vain tried every common expedient that was likely to contribute to his recovery, determined that an experiment should be made of the effects of music upon the king, her husband, who was extremely sensible to its charms. Upon the arrival of Farinelli, of whose extraordinary performance an account had been transmitted to Madrid from several parts of Europe, but particularly from Paris, her majesty contrived that there should be a concert in a room adjoining the king's apartment, in which this singer performed one of his most captivating songs. Philip appeared at first surprised, then moved, and at the end of the second air made the virtuoso enter the royal apartment, loading him with compliments and caresses, asked him how he could sufficiently reward such talents, assuring him that he could refuse him nothing. Farinelli, previously instructed, only begged that his majesty would permit his attendants to shave and dress him, and that he would endeavour to appear in council as usual. From this time the king's disease gave way to medicine, and the singer had the honour of the cure. By singing to his majesty every evening, his favour increased to such a degree that he was regarded as first minister; but, what is still more extraordinary, instead of being intoxicated or giddy with his elevation, Farinelli, never forgetting that he was a musician, behaved to the Spanish nobles about the court with such humility and propriety, that instead of envying his favour, they honoured him with their esteem and confidence."

Elizabeth Farnese was too clever a woman, and too deeply interested in directing the will of her husband, not to see the advantage she might derive from the admirable talent of Farinelli. She accordingly proposed to him to fix his residence at Madrid, assuring him an income of two thousand pounds sterling, on condition of his never singing anywhere but at court and before the king. Farinelli agreed to this proposal, and during the remaining ten years of Philip's life he sang four pieces to him every night. Under Ferdinand the Sixth, the son and successor of Philip the Fifth, who inherited the melancholy and indolence of his father, the fortune and credit of Farinelli received a still greater increase, for, repeating the vocal charm which had already operated so miraculously in the first instance, the gratified monarch at once invested the lucky singer with the Order of Calatrava, and loaded him besides with signal marks of favour, appointing him, amongst other things, to the post of intendant of musical and

dramatic representations to the court; and approaching the king's person as he now constantly did, Farinelli became a sort of quasi-political personage whom ambassadors and ministers found it their interest to take into consideration. As we have already seen, from Dr. Burney's statement, Farinelli used his extraordinary power with great moderation, and exercised kindness whenever he had an opportunity. A striking instance of his goodness of heart is shown in the following well-attested anecdote: "One day in going to the king's closet, to which he had at all times access, he heard an officer of the guard curse him, and say to another that was waiting, 'honours can be heaped on such scoundrels as these, while a poor soldier, like myself, after thirty years' service, is unnoticed.' Farinelli, without seeming to hear this reproach, complained to the king that he had neglected an old servant, and procured a regiment for the person who had spoken so harshly of him in the ante-chamber; and on quitting his majesty he gave the commission to the officer, telling him that he had heard him complain of having served thirty years, but added, 'you did wrong to accuse the king of neglecting to reward your zeal.'"

Of Farinelli's singular good nature and generosity, Dr. Burney also relates the following story: "This singer being ordered a superb suit of clothes for a gala at court, when the tailor brought it home, he asked him for his bill. 'I have made no bill, sir,' says the tailor, 'nor ever shall make one. Instead of money,' continues he, 'I have a favour to beg. I know that what I want is inestimable, and only fit for monarchs; but since I have had the honour to work for a person of whom every one speaks with rapture, all the payment I shall ever require will be a song.' Farinelli tried in vain to prevail on the tailor to take his money. At length, after a long debate, giving way to the humble entreaties of the trembling tradesman, and flattered, perhaps, more by the singularity of the adventure than by all the applause he had hitherto received, he took him into his music-room, and sang to him some of his most brilliant airs, taking pleasure in the astonishment of his ravished hearer; and the more he seemed surprised and affected, the more Farinelli exerted himself in every species of excellence. When he had done, the tailor, overcome with ecstasy, thanked him in the most rapturous and grateful manner, and prepared to retire. 'No,' says Farinelli, 'I am a little proud; and it is perhaps from that circumstance that I have acquired some small degree of superiority over other singers; I have given way to your weakness, it is but fair that, in your turn, you should indulge me in mine.' And taking out his purse, he insisted on his receiving a sum amounting to nearly double the worth of the suit of clothes."

Unshaken in credit and unaltered by prosperity, Farinelli continued for five-and-twenty years to devote himself to his successive royal patrons, but on the death of Ferdinand the Sixth he was abruptly dismissed by that king's brother,

who succeeded to the Spanish throne by the title of Charles the Third. His dismissal is ascribed to a change of policy, the new king having signed the family compact, a measure Farinelli had always opposed—a proof that the soprano had been in the habit of influencing important affairs of state. But although dismissed he was not disgraced, Charles the Third—the best of the Bourbons who ever governed Spain—allowing Farinelli to retain all his pensions, with the observation that he had never abused the kindness of the king's predecessors.

It was in 1761 that Farinelli left Spain and returned to Italy, having been absent from his native country seven-and-twenty years. He was now in his fifty-sixth year, and had been permitted would have settled at Naples, but political reasons interdicted his residence there, and he fixed his abode near Bologna, about a league from which city he built a sumptuous palace, where he passed the rest of his days, absenting himself only once, when he went to Rome. At Bologna, the large fortune he had made enabled him to live "en grand seigneur," indulging in the tastes and habits of one who had frequented the best society, and devoting himself to the Art by which he had achieved his position. His richly-furnished apartments were filled with the rarest musical instruments, to each of which he gave the name of some celebrated Italian painter. One of these, a gift from the Queen of Spain, he called his Correggio; others bore the names of Titian and Guido; and on his favourite, which he bought at Florence at the beginning of his career, he bestowed the appellation of Raffaele d'Urbino. His fondness for painting was yet more distinctly shown in a large saloon filled with pictures by the first masters of Madrid and Seville, amongst which were included portraits of the kings, his protectors, and that of Pope Benedict the Fourteenth. Rare books were also gathered in his palace, which he hospitably opened to all who sought his acquaintance. Dr. Burney paid him a visit there in 1771, and in his work, "The Present State of Music in France and Italy," has recorded a conversation which he had with the famous soprano. Farinelli expressed great regret that the happy days which he spent in Spain were for ever gone, but acknowledged that the first ten years, during which he always sang the same songs to his melancholy patron, had been very hard to bear. Dr. Burney says: "I found Farinelli looking younger than I had expected. He is tall, thin, and in excellent preservation. He had the kindness to conduct me to the house of Father Martini, in whose library I passed a part of my time, and when I observed that my great desire had been to know two persons so celebrated as Farinelli and Martini, the great singer replied, with a sigh, 'Oh, what Father Martini has done will endure, while the little talent which I possessed is already forgotten!'" Many other travellers of that time

also spoke in the highest terms of the lucky singer—amongst them, the German Keyssler, who, after praising the admirable qualities of his voice, which had a range of twenty-three notes, and was, in his opinion, incomparable, added that the general belief was that he had been particularly favoured by the Virgin Mary, for whom Farinelli's mother had a most particular devotion. Great people, too, were amongst Farinelli's visitors. In 1772, there came to see, and also to hear him, the Electress of Saxony, to whom he gave a grand breakfast, and then sat down to the piano, to sing an air of his own composition. Casanova, who relates the anecdote, says, "I was present on the occasion, and to my excessive surprise I saw the Electress suddenly leave her seat and throw herself into Farinelli's arms, exclaiming, 'I can now die content, since I have had the happiness of hearing you!'" Casanova tells another story, which reveals the only known act of Farinelli's life that was not creditable to him. Farinelli had adopted the son of his brother, Richard Broschi, the composer, and had given the young man and his wife, a very beautiful woman of good family, a suite of apartments in his palace. This was at first an act of pure friendship; but another feeling arose afterwards to diminish its value, for, strangely enough, the soprano fell in love with his niece, but the lady remained perfectly impassive to his pleadings, and, furious at her disdain, Farinelli sent his nephew on his travels, while he shut up his faithful spouse in her apartments, that he might at least have her constantly near him. On the 15th of July, 1782, the lucky singer died in his magnificent palace, at seventy-seven years of age, "a victim to delicate love."

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